to rest, for her little feet would carry her no farther. Everything was spruce and neat in the cottage: on the table was spread a white cloth, and there were seven little plates, seven little loaves and seven little glasses with wine in them; and seven knives and forks laid in order; and by the wall stood seven little beds. As she was very hungry, she picked a little piece of each loaf and drank a very little wine out of each glass; and after that she thought she would lie down and rest. So she tried all the little beds; but one was too long, and another was too short, and only the seventh suited her: so there she laid herself down and went to sleep.

By and by in came the masters of the cottage. Now they were seven little dwarfs that lived among the mountains and dug and searched for gold. They lit up their seven little lamps, and saw at once that all was not right.

The first said, 'Who has been sitting on my stool?'

The second, 'Who has been eating off my plate?'

The third, 'Who has been picking my bread?'

The fourth, 'Who has been meddling with my spoon?'

The fifth, 'Who has been handling my fork?'

The sixth, 'Who has been cutting with my knife?'

The seventh, 'Who has been drinking my wine?'

Then the first looked round and said, 'Who has been lying on my bed?' And the rest came running to him, and everyone cried out that somebody had been upon his bed. But the seventh saw Snow White, and called all his brethren to come and see her; and they cried out with wonder and astonishment and brought their lamps to look at her, and said, 'Good heavens! What a lovely child she is!' And they were very glad to see her, and took care not to wake her; and the seventh dwarf slept an hour with each of the other dwarfs in turn, till the night was gone.

In the morning Snow White told them all her story; and they pitied her, and said if she would keep all things in order, and cook and wash and knit and spin for them, she might stay where she was, and they would take good care of her. Then they went out all day long to their work, seeking for gold and silver in the mountains, and Snow White was left at home; but they warned her, and said, 'The queen will soon find out where you are, so take care to let no one in.'

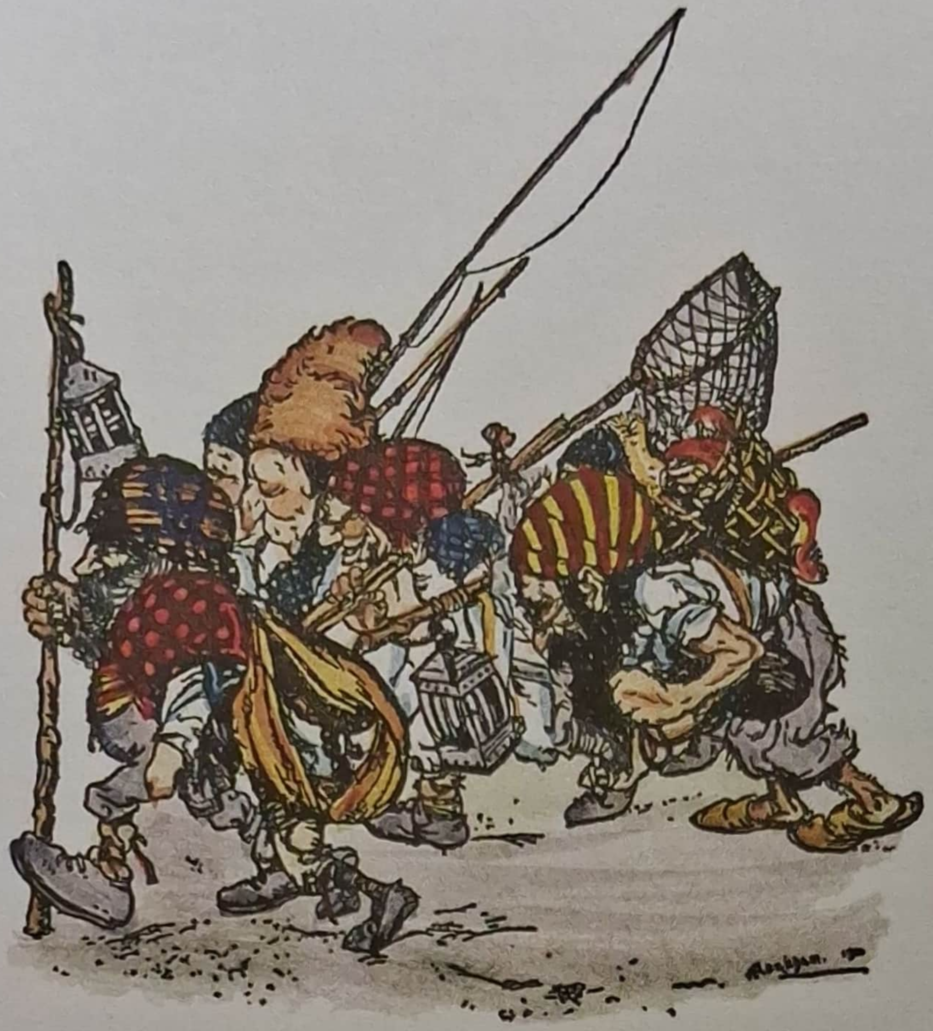
But the queen, now that she thought Snow White was dead, believed that she must be the handsomest lady in the land; and she went to her glass and said:

'Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest, tell me, who?'

And the glass answered:

'Thou, queen, art the fairest in all this land:
But over the hills, in the greenwood shade,
Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,
There Snow White is hiding her head; and she
Is lovelier far, O queen! than thee.'

Then the queen was very much frightened; for she knew that the glass always spoke the truth, and was sure that the servant had betrayed her. And she could not bear to think that anyone lived who was more beautiful than she was; so she dressed herself up as an old pedlar, and went her way over the hills, to the place where the dwarfs dwelt. Then she knocked at the door, and cried, 'Fine wares to sell!'



Snow White looked out of the window, and said, 'Good-day, good woman! What have you to sell?'

'Good wares, fine wares,' said she; 'laces and bobbins of all colours.'

'I will let the old lady in; she seems to be a very good sort of body,' thought Snow White, as she ran down and unbolted the door.

'Bless me!' said the old woman, 'how badly your stays are laced! Let me lace them up with one of my nice new laces.'

Snow White did not dream of any mischief, so she stood before the old woman; but she set to work so nimbly, and pulled the lace so tight, that Snow White's breath was stopped, and she fell down as if she were dead.

'There's an end to all thy beauty,' said the spiteful queen, and went away home.

In the evening the seven dwarfs came home; and I need not say how grieved they were to see their faithful Snow White stretched out upon the ground, as if she was quite dead. However, they lifted her up, and when they found what ailed her, they cut the lace; and in a little time she began to breathe, and very soon came back to life again. Then they said, 'The old woman was the queen herself; take care another time, and let no one in when we are away.'

When the queen got home, she went straight to her glass and spoke to it as before; but to her great grief it still said:

'Thou, queen, art the fairest in all this land.
But over the hills, in the greenwood shade,
Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,
There Snow White is hiding her head; and she
Is lovelier far, O queen! than thee.'

Then the blood ran cold in her heart with spite and malice to see that Snow White still lived; and she dressed herself up again, but in quite another dress from the one she wore before, and took with her a poisoned comb. When she reached the dwarfs' cottage, she knocked at the door, and cried, 'Fine wares to sell!'

But Snow White said, 'I dare not let anyone in.'

Then the queen said, 'Only look at my beautiful combs!' and gave her the poisoned one. And it looked so pretty, that she took it up and put it into her hair to try it; but the moment it touched her head, the poison was so powerful that she fell down senseless.

'There you may lie,' said the queen, and went her way.

But by good luck the dwarfs came in very early that evening; and when they saw Snow White lying on the ground, they guessed what had happened, and soon found the poisoned comb. And when they took it away she got well, and told them all that had passed; and they warned her once more not to open the door to anyone.

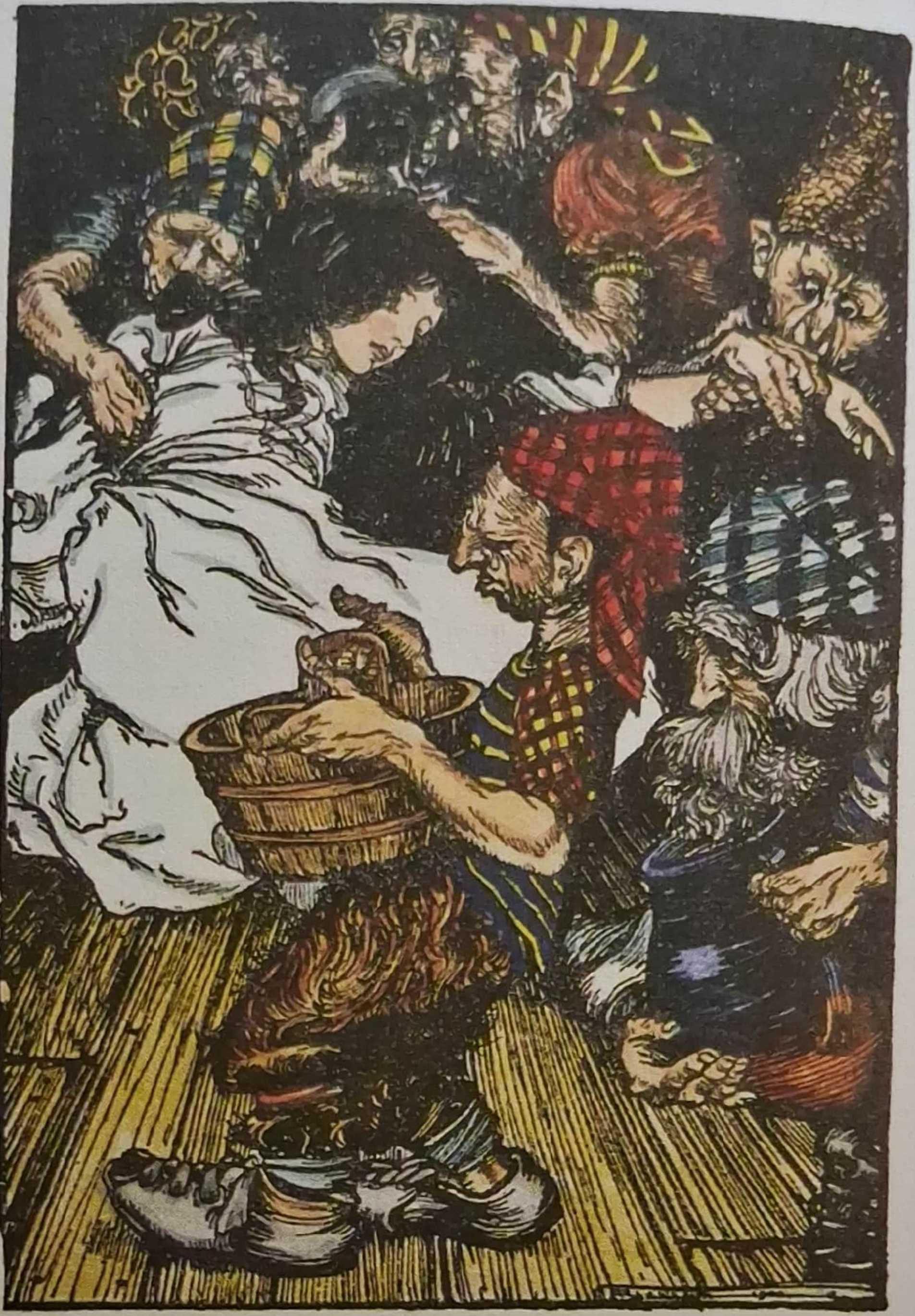
Meantime the queen went home to her glass, and shook with rage when she read the very same answer as before; and she said, 'Snow White shall die, if it cost me my life.'

So she went by herself into her chamber, and got ready a poisoned apple: the outside looked very rosy and tempting, but whoever tasted it was sure to die. Then she dressed herself up as a peasant's wife, and travelled over the hills to the dwarfs' cottage, and knocked at the door; but Snow White put her head out of the window and said, 'I dare not let anyone in, for the dwarfs have told me not to.'

'Do as you please,' said the old woman, 'but at any rate take this pretty apple; I will give it you.'

'No,' said Snow White, 'I dare not take it.'

'You silly girl!' answered the other, 'what are you afraid of? Do you think it is poisoned? Come! Do you eat one part, and I will eat the other.' Now the apple was made up so that one side was good while the other side was poisoned. Then Snow White was much tempted to taste, for the apple looked so very nice; and when she saw the old woman eat, she could wait no longer. But she had scarcely put the piece into her mouth, when she fell down dead upon the ground.



'This time nothing will save thee,' said the queen; and she went home to her glass, and at last it said: 'Thou, queen, art the fairest of all the fair.'

And then her wicked heart was glad, and as happy as such a heart could be.

When evening came, and the dwarfs arrived home, they found Snow White lying on the ground: no breath came from her lips, and they were afraid that she was quite dead. They lifted her up, and combed her hair, and washed her face with wine and water; but all was in vain, for the little girl seemed quite dead. So they laid her down upon a bier, and all seven watched and bewailed her three whole days; and then they thought they would bury her: but her cheeks were still rosy, and her face looked just as it did while she was alive; so they said, 'We will never bury her in the cold ground.' And they made a coffin of glass, so that they might still look at her, and wrote upon it in golden letters what her name was, and that she was a king's daughter. And the coffin was set beside the cottage among the hills, and one of the dwarfs always sat by it and watched. And the birds of the air came too, and bemoaned Snow White; and first of all came an owl, and then a raven, and at last a dove, and sat by her side.

And thus Snow White lay for a long, long time, and still only looked as though she was asleep; for she was even now as white as snow, and as red as blood, and as black as ebony.

At last a prince came and called at the dwarfs' house; and he saw Snow White, and read what was written in golden letters.

Then he offered the dwarfs money, and prayed and besought them to let him take her away; but they said, 'We will not part with her for all the gold in the world.'

At last, however, they had pity on him, and gave him the coffin; but the moment he lifted it up to carry it home with him, the piece of apple fell from between her lips, and Snow White awoke, and said, 'Where am I?'

And the prince said, 'Thou art quite safe with me.'

Then he told her all that had happened, and said, 'I love you far better than all the world; so come with me to my father's palace, and you shall be my wife.' And Snow White consented, and went home with the prince; and everything was got ready with great pomp and splendour for their wedding.

To the feast was asked, among the rest, Snow White's old enemy the queen; and as she was dressing herself in fine rich clothes, she looked in the glass and said:

> 'Tell me, glass, tell me true!
> Of all the ladies in the land,
> Who is fairest, tell me, who?

And the glass answered:

> 'Thou, lady, art loveliest here, I ween;
> But lovelier far is the new-made queen.'

When she heard this she started with rage; but her envy and curiosity were so great, that she could not help setting out to see the bride. And when she got there, and saw that it was no other than Snow White, who she thought had been dead a long while, she choked with rage and fell down and died; but Snow White and the prince lived and reigned happily over that land many, many years; and sometimes they went up into the mountains, and paid a visit to the little dwarfs, who had been so kind to Snow White in her time of need.

The Pink

There was once upon a time a queen to whom God had given no children. Every morning she went into the garden and prayed to God in heaven to bestow on her a son or a daughter. Then an angel from heaven came to her and said: 'Be at rest, you shall have a son with the power of wishing, so that whatsoever in the world he wishes for, that shall he have.' Then she went to the king, and told him the joyful tidings, and when the time was come she gave birth to a son, and the king was filled with gladness.

Every morning she went with the child to the garden where the wild beasts were kept, and washed herself there in a clear stream. It happened once, when the child was a little older, that it was lying in her arms and she fell asleep. Then came the old cook, who knew that the child had the power of wishing, and stole it away, and he took a hen, and cut it in pieces, and dropped some of its blood on the queen's apron and on her dress. Then he carried the child away to a secret place, where a nurse was obliged to suckle it, and he ran to the king and accused the queen of having allowed her child to be taken from her by the wild beasts.

When the king saw the blood on her apron, he believed this, and fell into such a passion that he ordered a high tower to be built, from which neither sun nor moon could be seen, and had his wife put into it, and walled her up. Here she was to stay for seven years without meat or drink so that she would die of hunger. But God sent two angels from heaven in the shape of white doves, which flew to her with food twice a day until the seven years were over.

The cook, however, thought to himself: 'If the child has the power of wishing, and I am here, he might very easily get me into trouble.' So he left the palace and went to the boy, who was already big enough to speak, and said to him: 'Wish for a beautiful palace for yourself with a garden, and all else that pertains to it.' Scarcely were the words out of the boy's mouth than everything was there that he had wished for. After a while the cook said to him: 'It is not well for you to be so alone, wish for a pretty girl as a companion.' Then the king's son wished for one, and she immediately stood before him, and was more beautiful than any painter could have painted her. The two played together, and loved each other with all their hearts, and the old cook went out hunting like a nobleman.

The thought occurred to him, however, that the king's son might someday wish to be with his father, and thus bring him into great peril. So he went out and took the maiden aside, and said: 'Tonight when the boy is asleep, go to his bed and plunge this knife into his heart, and bring me his heart and tongue, and if you do not do it, you shall lose your life.'

Thereupon he went away, and when he returned next day she had not done it, and said: 'Why should I shed the blood of an innocent boy who has never harmed anyone?'

The cook once more said: 'If you do not do it, it shall cost you your own life.'

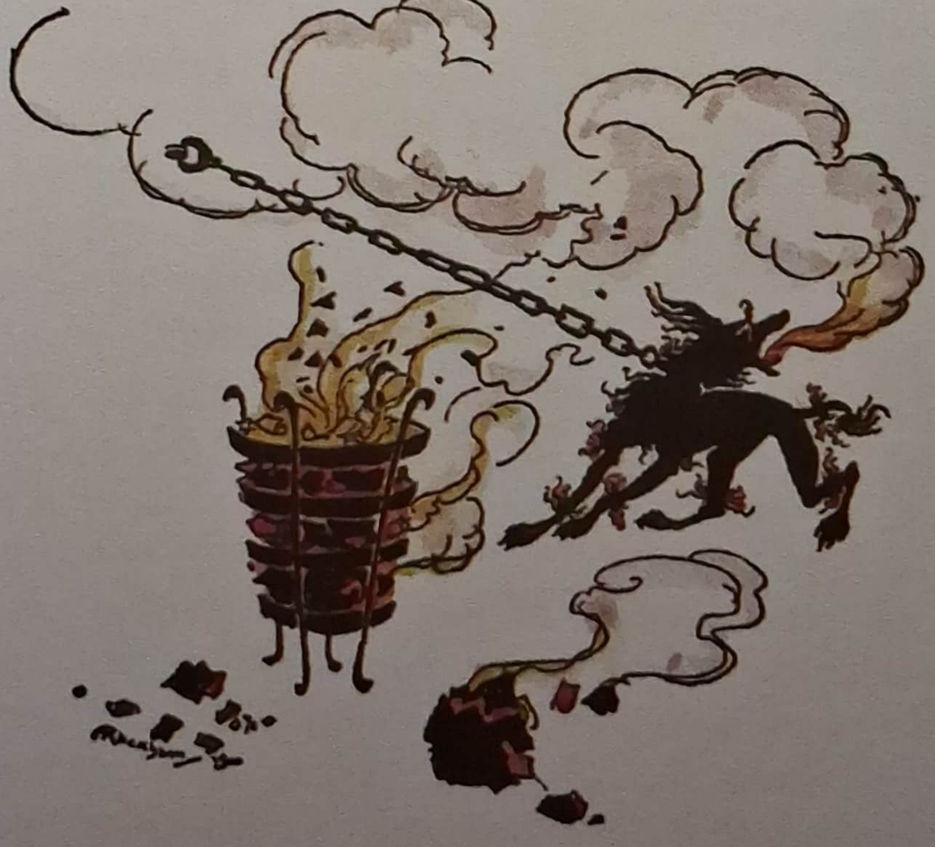
When he had gone away, she had a little hind brought to her, and ordered her to be killed, and took her heart and tongue, and laid them on a plate, and when she saw the old man coming, she said to the boy: 'Lie down in your bed, and draw the clothes over you.'

Then the wicked wretch came in and said: 'Where are the boy's heart and tongue?'

The girl reached the plate to him, but the king's son threw off the quilt, and said: 'You old sinner, why did you want to kill me? Now will I pronounce thy sentence. You shall become a black poodle and have a gold collar round your neck, and shall eat burning coals, till the flames burst forth from your throat.'

And when he had spoken these words, the old man was changed into a poodle dog, and had a gold collar round his neck, and the cooks were ordered to bring up some live coals, and these he ate, until the flames broke forth from his throat.

The king's son remained there a short while longer, and he thought of his mother, and wondered if she were still alive. At length he said to the maiden: 'I will go home to my own country; if you will go



with me, I will provide for you.'

'Ah,' she replied, 'the way is so long, and what shall I do in a strange land where I am unknown?' As she did not seem quite willing, and as they could not be parted from each other, he wished that she might be changed into a beautiful pink, and took her with him. Then he went away to his own country, and the poodle had to run after him.

He went to the tower in which his mother was confined, and as it was so high, he wished for a ladder which would reach up to the very top. Then he mounted up and looked inside, and cried: 'Beloved mother, lady queen, are you still alive, or are you dead?'

She answered: 'I have just eaten, and am still satisfied,' for she thought the angels were there.

Said he: 'I am your dear son, whom the wild beasts were said to have torn from your arms; but I am alive still, and will soon set you free.'

Then he descended again, and went to his father, and caused himself to be announced as a strange huntsman, and asked if he could offer him service. The king said yes, if he was skilful and could get game for him, he should come to him, but that deer had never taken up their quarters in any part of the country. Then the huntsman promised to procure as much game for him as he could possibly use at the royal table. So he summoned all the huntsmen together, and bade them go out into the forest with him. And he went with them and made them form a great circle, open at one end where he stationed himself, and began to wish. Two hundred deer and more came running inside the circle at once, and the huntsmen shot them. Then they were all placed on sixty country carts, and driven home to the king, and for once he was able to deck his table with game, after having had none at all for years.

Now the king felt great joy at this, and commanded that his entire household should eat with him next day, and made a great feast. When they were all assembled together, he said to the huntsman: 'As you are so clever, you shall sit by me.'

He replied: 'Lord king, your majesty must excuse me, I am a poor huntsman.'

But the king insisted: 'You shall sit by me.'

While he was sitting there, he thought of his dearest mother, and wished that one of the king's principal servants would begin to speak of her, and would ask how it was faring with the queen in the tower, and if she were alive still, or had perished.

Hardly had he formed the wish than the marshal began, and said: 'Your majesty, we live joyously here, but how is the queen living in the tower? Is she still alive, or has she died?'

But the king replied: 'She let my dear son be torn to pieces by wild beasts; I will not have her named.'

Then the huntsman arose and said: 'Gracious lord father, she is alive still, and I am her son, and I was not carried away by wild beasts, but by that wretch the old cook, who tore me from her arms when she was asleep, and sprinkled her apron with the blood of a chicken.' Thereupon he took the dog with the golden collar, and said: 'That is the wretch!' and caused live coals to be brought, and these the dog was compelled to devour before the sight of all, until flames burst forth from its throat. On this the huntsman asked the king if he would like to see the dog in his true shape, and wished him back into the form of the cook, in the which he stood immediately, with his white apron, and his knife by his side. When the king saw him he fell into a passion, and ordered him to be cast into the deepest dungeon. Then the huntsman spoke further and said: 'Father, will you see the maiden who brought me up so tenderly and who was afterwards to murder me, but did not do it, though her own life depended on it?'

The king replied: 'Yes, I would like to see her.'

The son said: 'Most gracious father, I will show her to you in the form of a beautiful flower,' and he thrust his hand into his pocket and brought forth the pink, and placed it on the royal table, and it was so beautiful that the king had never seen one to equal it. Then the son said: 'Now will I show her to you in her own form,' and wished that she might become a maiden, and she stood there looking so beautiful that no painter could have made her look more so.

And the king sent two waiting-maids and two attendants to the tower, to fetch the queen and bring her to the royal table. But when she was led in she ate nothing, and said: 'The gracious and merciful God who has supped me in the tower, will soon set me free.' She lived three days more, and then died happily, and when she was buried, the two white doves which had brought her food to the tower, and were angels of heaven, followed her body and seated themselves on her grave.

The aged king ordered the cook to be torn in four pieces, but grief consumed the king's own heart, and he soon died. His son married the beautiful maiden whom he had brought with him as a flower in his pocket, and whether they are still alive or not is known to God.

Clever Elsie

There was once a man who had a daughter who was called Clever Elsie. And when she had grown up her father said: 'We will get her married.'

'Yes,' said the mother, 'if only someone would come who would have her.'

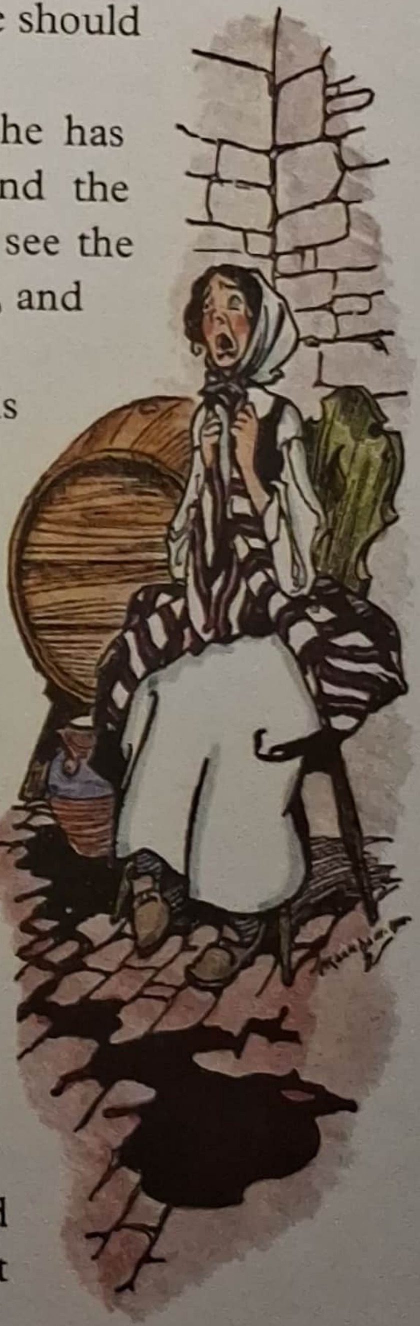
At length a man who was called Hans came from a distance and wooed her, but he stipulated that Clever Elsie should be really smart.

'Oh,' said the father, 'she has plenty of good sense;' and the mother said: 'Oh, she can see the wind coming up the street, and hear the flies coughing.'

'Well,' said Hans, 'if she is not really smart, I won't have her.'

When they were sitting at dinner and had eaten, the mother said: 'Elsie, go into the cellar and fetch some beer.'

Then Clever Elsie took the pitcher from the wall, went into the cellar, and tapped the lid briskly as she went, so that the time might not appear long. When she was below she fetched herself a chair, and set it



before the barrel, so that she had no need to stoop and thus hurt her back or do herself any unexpected injury. Then she placed the can before her, and turned the tap, and while the beer was running, rather than let her eyes be idle, she looked up at the wall, and after much peering here and there, saw a pickaxe exactly above her, which the masons had accidentally left there.

Then Clever Elsie began to weep and said: 'If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and we send him into the cellar here to draw beer, then the pickaxe will fall on his head and kill him.'

Then she sat and wept and screamed, with all the strength of her body, over the misfortune which lay before her. Those upstairs waited for the drink, but Clever Elsie still did not come.

Then the woman said to the servant: 'Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie is.'

The maid went and found her sitting in front of the barrel, screaming loudly. 'Elsie why do you weep?' asked the maid.

'Ah,' she answered, 'have I not reason to weep? If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and has to draw beer here, the pickaxe will perhaps fall on his head, and kill him.'

Then said the maid: 'What a clever Elsie we have!' and sat down beside her and began loudly to weep over the misfortune.

After a while, as the maid did not come back, and those upstairs were thirsty for the beer, the man said to the boy: 'Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie and the girl are.'

The boy went down, and there sat Clever Elsie and the girl both weeping together.

Then he asked: 'Why are you weeping?'

'Ah,' said Elsie, 'have I not reason to weep? If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and has to draw beer here, the pickaxe will fall on his head and kill him.'

Then said the boy: 'What a clever Elsie we have!' and sat down by her, and likewise began to howl loudly.

Upstairs they waited for the boy, but as he still did not return, the man said to the woman: 'Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie is!'

The woman went down, and found all three in the midst of their lamentations, and enquired what was the cause; then Elsie told her also that her future child was to be killed by the pickaxe when it grew big and had to draw beer and the pickaxe fell down.

Then said the mother likewise: 'What a clever Elsie we have!' and sat down and wept with them.

The man upstairs waited a short time, but as his wife did not come back and his thirst grew ever greater, he said: 'I must go into the cellar myself and see where Elsie is.'

But when he got into the cellar, and they were all sitting together crying, and he heard the reason – that Elsie's child was the cause, the one that Elsie might perhaps bring into the world someday, who might be killed by the pickaxe, if he should happen to be sitting beneath it drawing beer just at the very time when it fell down – he cried: 'Oh, what a clever Elsie!' and sat down, and likewise wept with them.

The bridegroom stayed upstairs alone for a long time; then as no one would come back he thought: 'They must be waiting for me below – I too must go there and see what they are about.'

When he got down, the five of them were sitting screaming and lamenting quite piteously, each outdoing the other.

'What misfortune has happened then?' asked he.

'Ah, dear Hans,' said Elsie, 'if we marry each other and have a child, and he is big, and we perhaps send him here to draw something to drink, then the pickaxe which has been left up there might dash his brains out if it were to fall down, so have we not reason to weep?'

'Come,' said Hans, 'more understanding than that is not needed for my household; as you are such a clever Elsie, I will have you,' and seized her hand, took her upstairs with him, and married her.

After Hans had had her some time, he said: 'Wife, I am going out to work to earn some money for us; go into the field and cut the corn that we may have some bread.'

'Yes, dear Hans, I will do that.'

After Hans had gone away, she cooked herself some good broth and took it into the field with her. When she came to the field she said to herself: 'What shall I do; shall I cut first, or shall I eat first? Oh, I will eat first.'

Then she drank her cup of broth and when she was fully satisfied, she once more said: 'What shall I do? Shall I cut first, or shall I sleep first? I will sleep first.' Then she lay down among the corn and fell asleep.

Hans had been at home for a long time, but Elsie did not come; then said he: 'What a clever Elsie I have; she is so industrious that she does not even come home to eat.' But when evening came and she still stayed away, Hans went out to see what she had cut; but nothing was cut, and she was lying among the corn asleep.

Then Hans hastened home and brought a fowler's net with little bells and hung it round about her, and she still went on sleeping. Then he ran home, shut the house-door, and sat down in his chair and worked. At length, when it was quite dark, Clever Elsie awoke and when she got up there was a jingling all round about her, and the bells rang at each step she took.

Then she was alarmed, and became uncertain whether she really was Clever Elsie or not, and said: 'Is it I, or is it not I?' But she knew not what answer to make to this, and stood for a time in doubt; at length she thought: 'I will go home and ask if it be I, or if it be not I, they will be sure to know.'

She ran to the door of her own house, but it was shut; then she knocked at the window and cried: 'Hans, is Elsie within?'

'Yes,' answered Hans, 'she is within.'

Hereupon she was terrified, and said: 'Ah, heavens! Then it is not I,' and went to another door; but when the people heard the jingling of the bells they would not open it, and she could get in nowhere. Then she ran out of the village, and no one has seen her since.

Ashputtel

The wife of a rich man fell sick; and when she felt that her end drew nigh, she called her only daughter to her bedside, and said, 'Always be a good girl, and I will look down from heaven and watch over you.'

Soon afterwards she shut her eyes and died, and was buried in the garden; and the little girl went every day to her grave and wept, and was always good and kind to all about her. And the snow fell and spread a beautiful white covering over the grave; but by the time the spring came, and the sun had melted it away again, her father had married another wife. This new wife had two daughters of her own that she brought home with her; they were fair in face but foul at heart, and it was now a sorry time for the poor little girl.

'What does the good-for-nothing want in the parlour?' said they; 'they who would eat bread should first earn it; away with the kitchen-maid!'

Then they took away her fine clothes, and gave her an old grey frock to put on, and laughed at her, and turned her into the kitchen. There she was forced to do hard work; to rise early before daylight, to bring the water, to make the fire, to cook and to wash. Besides that, the sisters plagued her in all sorts of ways, and laughed at her. In the evening when she was tired, she had no bed to lie down on, but was made to lie by the hearth among the ashes; and as this, of course, made her always dusty and dirty, they called her Ashputtel.

It happened one day that the father was going to the fair, and he asked his wife's daughters what he should bring them.

'Fine clothes,' said the first;

'Pearls and diamonds,' cried the second.

'Now, child,' said he to his own daughter, 'what will you have?'

'The first twig, dear father, that brushes against your hat when you turn your face to come homewards,' said she.

Then he bought for the first two the fine clothes and pearls and diamonds they had asked for; and on his way home, as he rode through a green copse, a hazel twig brushed against him, and almost pushed off his hat: so he broke it off and brought it away; and when he got home he gave it to his daughter. Then she took it, and went to her mother's grave and planted it there; and cried so much that it was watered with her tears; and there it grew and became a fine tree. Three times every day she went to it and cried; and soon a little bird came and built its nest upon the tree, and talked with her, and watched over her, and brought her whatever she wished for.

Now it happened that the king of that land held a feast, which was to last three days; and out of those who came to it his son was to choose a bride for himself. Ashputtel's two sisters were asked to come, so they called her up, and said, 'Now, comb our hair, brush our shoes and tie our sashes for us, for we are going to dance at the king's feast.'

Then she did as she was told; but when all was done she could not help crying, for she should so have liked to have gone with them to the ball; and at last she begged her mother very hard to let her go.

'You, Ashputtel!' said she; 'you who have nothing to wear, no clothes at all, and who cannot even dance – you want to go to the ball?' And when the girl kept on begging, she said at last, to get rid of her, 'I will throw this dishful of peas into the ash-heap, and if in two hours' time you have picked them all out, you shall go to the feast too.'

Then she threw the peas down among the ashes, but the little maiden ran out at the back door into the garden, and cried out:

'Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all come help me, quick!
Haste ye, haste ye – pick, pick, pick!'

Then first came two white doves, flying in at the kitchen window; next came two turtle-doves; and after them came all the little birds under heaven, chirping and fluttering in, and they flew down into the ashes. And the little doves stooped their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began to pick, pick, pick; and among them all they soon picked out all the peas and put them into the dish, but left the ashes. Long before the end of the hour the work was quite done, and all flew out again at the windows.

Then Ashputtel brought the dish to her mother, overjoyed at the thought that now she should go to the ball. But the mother said, 'No, no! You slut, you have no clothes, and cannot dance; you shall not go.' And when Ashputtel begged very hard to go, she said, 'If you can in one hour's time pick two of those dishes of peas out of the ashes, you shall go.' And thus she thought she should at least get rid of her. So she shook two dishes of peas into the ashes.

But the little maiden went out into the garden at the back of the house, and cried out as before:

'Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all come help me, quick!
Haste ye, haste ye – pick, pick, pick!'

Then first came two white doves in at the kitchen window; next came two turtle-doves; and after them came all the little birds under heaven, chirping and hopping about. And they flew down into the ashes; and the little doves put their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began pick, pick, pick; and they put all the peas into the dishes, and left all the ashes. Before half an hour's time all was done, and out they flew again. And then Ashputtel took the dishes to her mother, rejoicing to think that she should now go to the ball. But her mother said, 'It is all of no use, you cannot go; you have no clothes, and cannot dance, and you would only put us to shame' – and off she went with her two daughters to the ball.

Now when all were gone, and nobody left at home, Ashputtel went sorrowfully and sat down under the hazel tree and cried out:

'Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!'

Then her friend the bird flew out of the tree, and brought a gold and silver dress for her, and slippers of spangled silk; and she put them on, and followed her sisters to the feast. But they did not know her, and thought it must be some strange princess, she looked so fine and beautiful in her rich clothes; and they never once thought of Ashputtel, taking it for granted that she was safe at home in the dirt.

The king's son soon came up to her, and took her by the hand and danced with her, and no one else; and he never left her side, and when anyone else came to ask her to dance, he said, 'This lady is dancing with me.'

Thus they danced till a late hour of the night, and then she wanted to go home; and the king's son said, 'I shall go and take care of you to your home;' for he wanted to see where the beautiful maiden lived. But she slipped away from him, unawares, and ran off towards home; and as the prince followed her, she jumped up into the pigeon-house and shut the door. Then he waited till her father came home, and told him that the unknown maiden, who had been at the feast, had hid herself in the pigeon-house. But when they had broken open the door they found no one within; and as they came back into the house, Ashputtel was lying, as she always did, in her dirty frock by the ashes, and her dim little lamp was burning in the chimney. For she had run as quickly as she could through the pigeon-house and on to the hazel tree, and had there taken off her beautiful clothes, and put them beneath the tree, that the bird might carry them away, and had lain down again amid the ashes in her little grey frock.

The next day when the feast was again held, and her father, mother, and sisters were gone, Ashputtel went to the hazel tree and said:

'Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!'

And the bird came and brought a still finer dress than the one she had worn the day before. And when she came in it to the ball, everyone wondered at her beauty; and the king's son, who was waiting for her, took her by the hand, and danced with her; and when anyone asked her to dance, he said as before, 'This lady is dancing with me.'

When night came she wanted to go home, and the king's son followed here as before, that he might see into what house she went; but she sprang away from him all at once into the garden behind her father's house. In this garden stood a fine large pear tree full of ripe fruit; and Ashputtel, not knowing where to hide herself, jumped up into it without being seen. Then the king's son lost sight of her, and could not find out where she was gone, but waited till her father came home, and said to him, 'The unknown lady who danced with me has slipped away, and I think she must have sprung into the pear tree.' The father thought to himself, 'Can it be Ashputtel?' So he had an axe brought; and they cut down the tree, but found no one upon it. And when they came back into the kitchen, there lay Ashputtel among the ashes; for she had slipped down on the other side of the tree, and carried her beautiful clothes back to the bird at the hazel tree, and then put on her little grey frock.

The third day, when her father and mother and sisters were gone, she went again into the garden and said:

'Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!'

Then her kind friend the bird brought a dress still finer than the former one, and slippers which were all of gold, so that when she came to the feast no one knew what to say for wonder at her beauty; and the king's son danced with nobody but her; and when anyone else asked her to dance, he said, 'This lady is my partner, sir.'

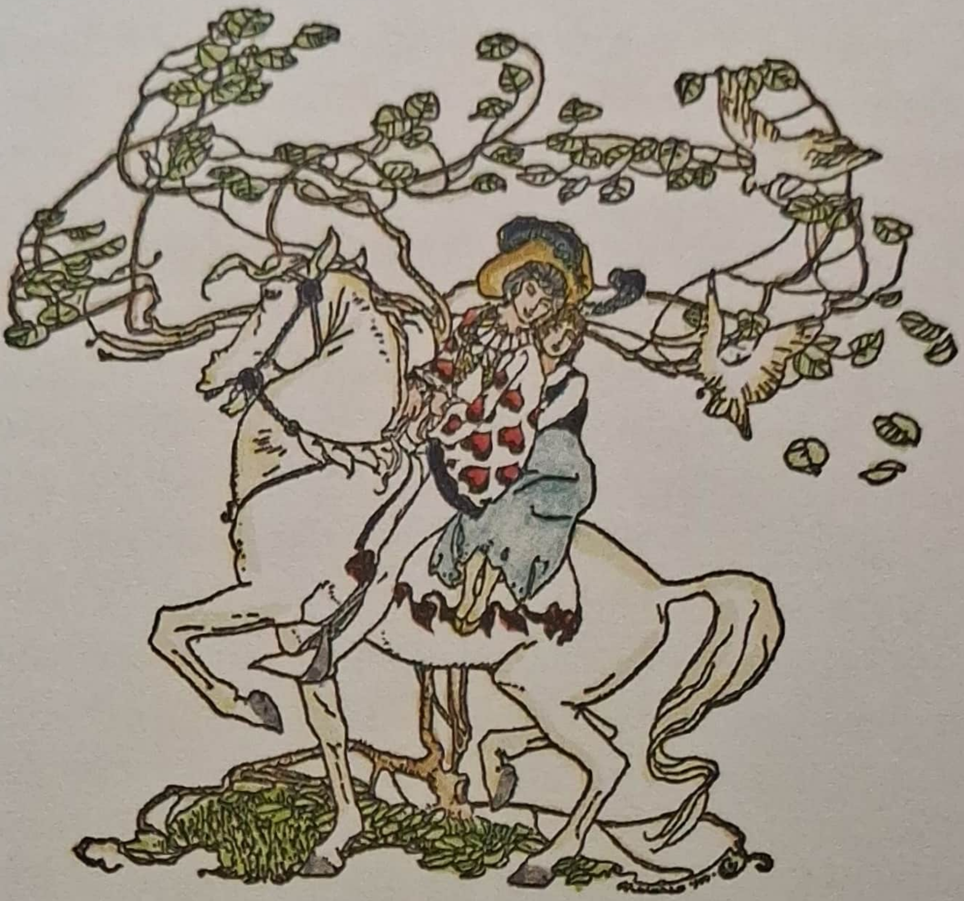
When night came she wanted to go home; and the king's son would go with her, and said to himself, 'I will not lose her this time;' but, somehow, she again slipped away from him, though in such a hurry that she dropped her left golden slipper upon the stairs.

The prince took the shoe, and went the next day to the king his father, and said, 'I will take for my wife the lady that this golden slipper fits.'

Then both the sisters were overjoyed to hear it; for they had beautiful feet, and had no doubt that they could wear the golden slipper. The eldest went first into the room where the slipper was, and wanted to try it on, and the mother stood by. But her great toe could not go into it, and the shoe was altogether much too small for her. Then the mother gave her a knife, and said, 'Never mind, cut it off; when you are queen you will not care about toes; you will not want to walk.' So the silly girl cut off her great toe, and thus squeezed on the shoe, and went to the king's son. Then he took her for his bride, and set her beside him on his horse, and rode away with her homewards.

But on their way home they had to pass by the hazel tree that Ashputtel had planted; and on the branch sat a little dove singing:

> 'Back again! back again! Look to the shoe!
> The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
> Prince! Prince! Look again for thy bride,
> For she's not the true one that sits by thy side.'



Then the prince got down and looked at her foot; and he saw, by the blood that streamed from it, what a trick she had played him. So he turned his horse round, and brought the false bride back to her home, and said, 'This is not the right bride; let the other sister try and put on the slipper.' Then she went into the room and got her foot into the shoe, all but the heel, which was too large. But her mother squeezed it in till the blood came, and took her to the king's son, and he set her as his bride by his side on his horse, and rode away with her.

But when they came to the hazel tree the little dove sat there still, and sang:

'Back again! back again! Look to the shoe!
The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
Prince! Prince! Look again for thy bride,
For she's not the true one that sits by thy side.'

Then he looked down, and saw that the blood streamed so much from the shoe, that her white stockings were quite red. So he turned his horse and brought her also back again. 'This is not the true bride,' said he to the father; 'have you no other daughters?'

'No,' said he; 'there is only a little dirty Ashputtel here, the child of my first wife; I am sure she cannot be the bride.' The prince told him to send her. But the mother said, 'No, no, she is much too dirty; she will not dare to show herself.'

However, the prince would have her come; and she first washed her face and hands, and then went in and curtsied to him, and he reached her the golden slipper. Then she took her clumsy shoe off her left foot, and put on the golden slipper; and it fitted her as if it had been made for her. And when he drew near and looked at her face he knew her, and said, 'This is the right bride.'

But the mother and both the sisters were frightened, and turned pale with anger as he took Ashputtel on his horse, and rode away with her. And when they came to the hazel tree, the white dove sang:

'Home! home! Look at the shoe!
Princess! The shoe was made for you!
Prince! Prince! Take home thy bride,
For she is the true one that sits by thy side!'

And when the dove had done its song, it came flying, and perched upon her right shoulder, and so went home with her.

The White Snake

A long time ago there lived a king who was famed for his wisdom through all the land. Nothing was hidden from him, and it seemed as if news of the most secret things was brought to him through the air. But he had a strange custom; every day after dinner, when the table was cleared, and no one else was present, a trusty servant had to bring him one more dish. It was covered, however, and even the servant did not know what was in it, neither did anyone know, for the king never took off the cover to eat of it until he was quite alone.

This had gone on for a long time, when one day the servant, who took away the dish, was overcome with such curiosity that he could not help carrying the dish into his room. When he had carefully locked the door, he lifted up the cover, and saw a white snake lying on the dish. But when he saw it he could not deny himself the pleasure of tasting it, so he cut of a little bit and put it into his mouth. No sooner had it touched his tongue than he heard a strange whispering of little voices outside his window. He went and listened, and then noticed that it was the sparrows who were chattering together, and telling one another of all kinds of things which they had seen in the fields and woods. Eating the snake had given him the power of understanding the language of animals.

Now it so happened that on this very day the queen lost her most beautiful ring, and suspicion of having stolen it fell upon this trusty servant, who was allowed to go everywhere. The king ordered the man to be brought before him, and threatened with angry words that unless he could before the morrow point out the thief, he himself should be looked upon as guilty and executed. In vain he declared his innocence; he was dismissed with no better answer.

In his trouble and fear he went down into the courtyard and took thought how to help himself out of his trouble. Now some ducks were sitting together quietly by a brook and taking their rest; and, while they were making their feathers smooth with their bills, they were having a confidential conversation together. The servant stood by and listened. They were telling one another of all the places where they had been waddling about all the morning, and what good food they had found; and one said in a pitiful tone: 'Something lies heavy on my stomach; as I was eating in haste I swallowed a ring which lay under the queen's window.' The servant at once seized her by the neck, carried her to the kitchen, and said to the cook: 'Here is a fine duck; pray, kill her.'

'Yes,' said the cook, and weighed her in his hand; 'she has spared no trouble to fatten herself, and has been waiting to be roasted long enough.' So he cut off her head, and as she was being dressed for the spit, the queen's ring was found inside her.

The servant could now easily prove his innocence; and the king, to make amends for the wrong, allowed him to ask a favour, and promised him the best place in the court that he could wish for. The servant refused everything, and only asked for a horse and some money for travelling, as he had a mind to see the world and go about a little. When his request was granted, he set out on his way, and one day came to a pond, where he saw three fishes caught in the reeds and gasping for water. Now, though it is said that fishes are dumb, he heard them lamenting that they must perish so miserably, and, as he had a kind heart, he got off his horse and put the three prisoners back into the water. They leapt with delight, put out their heads, and cried to him: 'We will remember you and repay you for saving us!'

He rode on, and after a while it seemed to him that he heard a voice in the sand at his feet. He listened, and heard an ant-king complain: 'Why cannot folks, with their clumsy beasts, keep off our bodies? That stupid horse, with his heavy hoofs, has been treading down my people without mercy!' So he turned on to a side path and the ant-king cried out to him: 'We will remember you – one good turn deserves another!'

The path led him into a wood, and there he saw two old ravens standing by their nest, and throwing out their young ones. 'Out with you, you idle, good-for-nothing creatures!' cried they; 'we cannot find food for you any longer; you are big enough, and can provide for yourselves.' But the poor young ravens lay upon the ground, flapping their wings, and crying: 'Oh, what helpless chicks we are! We must shift for ourselves, and yet we cannot fly! What can we do, but lie here and starve?' So the good young fellow alighted and killed his horse with his sword, and gave it to them for food. Then they came hopping up to it, satisfied their hunger, and cried: 'We will remember you – one good turn deserves another!'

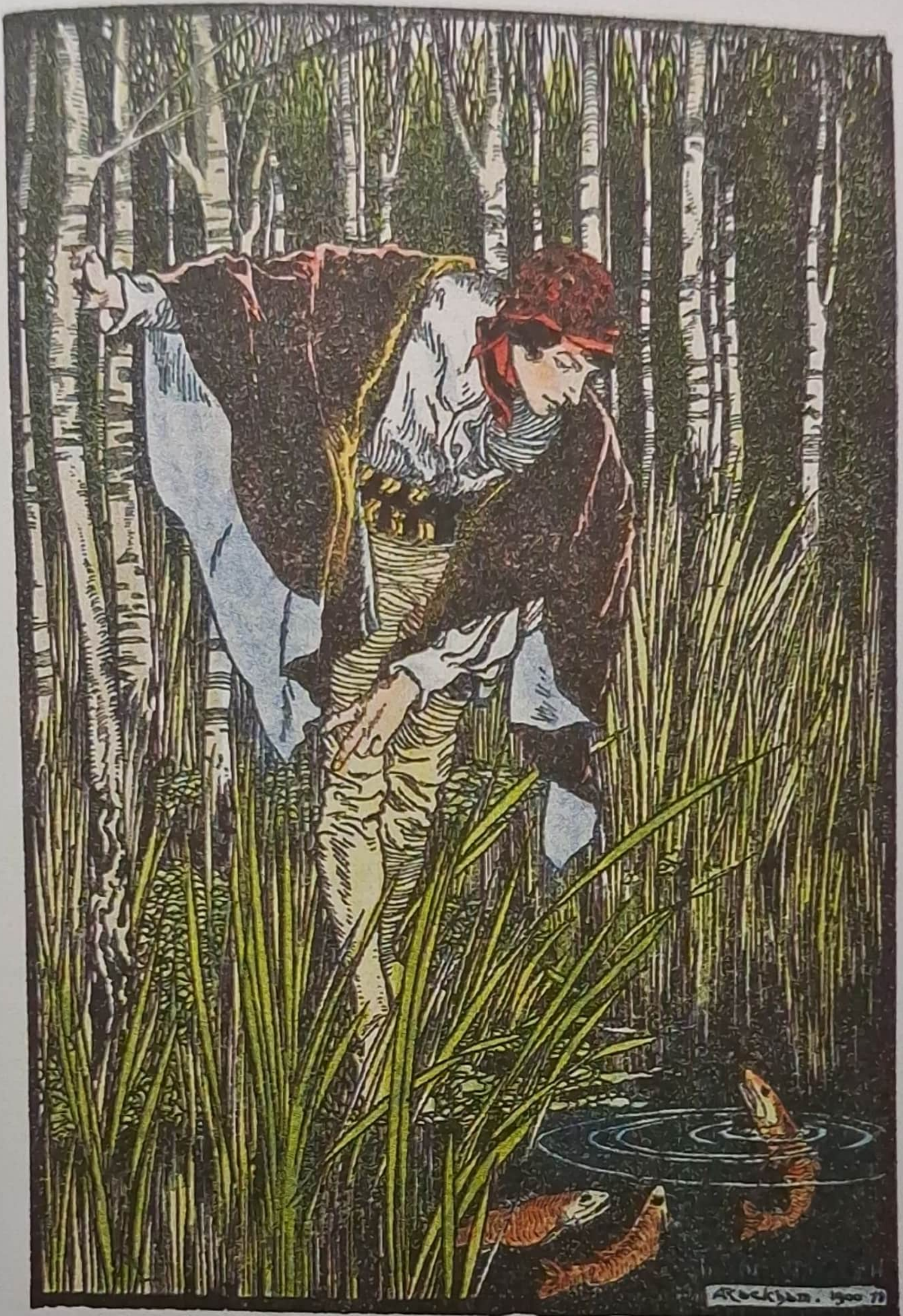
And now he had to use his own legs, and when he had walked a long way, he came to a large city. There was a great noise and crowd in the streets, and a man rode up on horseback, crying aloud: 'The king's daughter wants a husband; but whoever seeks her hand must perform a hard task, and if he does not succeed he will forfeit his life.' Many had already made the attempt, but in vain; nevertheless when the youth saw the king's daughter he was so overcome by her great beauty that he forgot all danger, went before the king and declared himself a suitor.

So he was led out to the sea, and a gold ring was thrown into it, before his eyes; then the king ordered him to fetch this ring up from the bottom of the sea, and added: 'If you come up again without it you will be thrown in again and again until you perish amid the waves.' All the people grieved for the handsome youth; then they went away, leaving him alone by the sea.

He stood on the shore and considered what he should do; suddenly he saw three fishes come swimming towards him, and they were the very fishes whose lives he had saved. The one in the middle held a mussel in its mouth, which it laid on the shore at the youth's feet, and when he had taken it up and opened it, there lay the gold ring in the shell. Full of joy he took it to the king and expected that he would grant him the promised reward.

But when the proud princess perceived that he was not her equal in birth, she scorned him, and required him first to perform another task. She went down into the garden and strewed with her own hands ten sackfuls of millet-seed on the grass; then she said: 'Tomorrow morning before sunrise these must be picked up, and not a single grain be wanting.'

The youth sat down in the garden and considered how it might be possible to perform this task, but he could think of nothing, and there he sat sorrowfully



awaiting the break of day, when he should be led to his death. But as soon as the first rays of the sun shone into the garden he saw all the ten sacks standing side by side, quite full, and not a single grain was missing. The ant-king had come in the night with thousands and thousands of ants, and the grateful creatures had by great industry picked up all the millet-seeds and gathered them into the sacks.

Presently the king's daughter herself came down into the garden, and was amazed to see that the young man had done the task she had given him. But she could not yet conquer her proud heart, and said: 'Although he has performed both the tasks, he shall not be my husband until he has brought me the Golden Apple from the Tree of Life.'

The youth did not know where the Tree of Life stood, but he set out, and would have gone on for ever, as long as his legs would carry him, though he had no hope of finding it. After he had wandered through three kingdoms, he came one evening to a wood, and lay down under a tree to sleep. But he heard a rustling in the branches, and a golden apple fell into his hand. At the same time three ravens flew down to him, perched themselves upon his knee, and said: 'We are the three young ravens whom you saved from starving; when we had grown big, and heard that you were seeking the Golden Apple, we flew over the sea to the end of the world, where the Tree of Life stands, and have brought you the apple.'

The youth, full of joy, set out homewards, and took the Golden Apple to the king's beautiful daughter, who had now no more excuses left to make. They cut the Apple of Life in two and ate it together; and then her heart became full of love for him, and they lived in undisturbed happiness to a great age.

The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids

There was once upon a time an old goat who had seven little kids, and loved them with all the love of a mother for her children. One day she wanted to go into the forest and fetch some food. So she called all seven to her and said: 'Dear children, I have to go into the forest; be on your guard against the wolf; if he comes in, he will devour you all – skin, hair and everything. The wretch often disguises himself, but you will know him at once by his rough voice and his black feet.' The kids said: 'Dear mother, we will take good care of ourselves; you may go away without any anxiety.' Then the old one bleated, and went on her way with an easy mind.

It was not long before someone knocked at the house-door and called: 'Open the door, dear children; your mother is here, and has brought something back with her for each of you.'

But the little kids knew that it was the wolf, by the rough voice. 'We will not open the door,' cried they, 'you are not our mother. She has a soft, pleasant voice, but your voice is rough; you are the wolf!'

Then the wolf went away to a shopkeeper and bought himself a great lump of chalk, ate this and made his voice soft with it. Then he came back, knocked at the door of the house, and called: 'Open the door, dear children, your mother is here and has brought something back with her for each of you.'

But the wolf had laid his black paws against the window, and the children saw them and cried: 'We will not open the door, our mother has not black feet like you: you are the wolf!'

Then the wolf ran to a baker and said: 'I have hurt my feet, rub some dough over them for me.' And when the baker had rubbed his feet over, he ran to the miller and said: 'Strew some white meal over my feet for me.' The miller thought to himself: 'The wolf wants to deceive someone,' and refused; but the wolf said: 'If you will not do it, I will devour you.' Then the miller was afraid, and made his paws white for him. Truly, this is the way of mankind.

So now the wretch went for the third time to the house-door, knocked at it and said: 'Open the door for me, children, your dear little mother has come home, and has brought every one of you something back from the forest with her.'

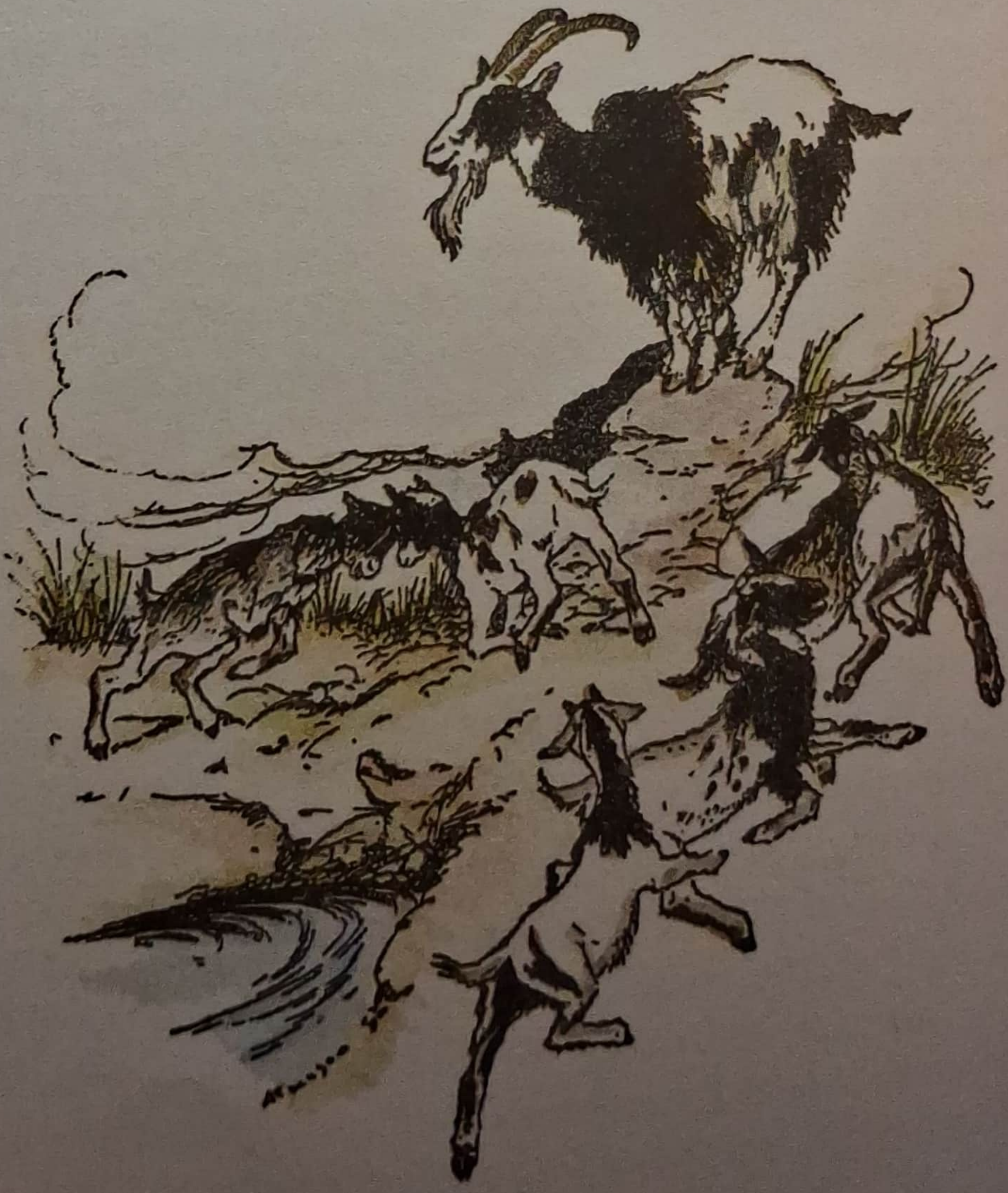
The little kids cried: 'First show us your paws that we may know if you are our dear little mother.'

Then he put his paws in through the window and when the kids saw that they were white, they believed that all he said was true, and opened the door. But who should come in but the wolf! They were terrified and wanted to hide themselves. One sprang under the table, the second into the bed, the third into the stove, the fourth into the kitchen, the fifth into the cupboard, the sixth under the washing-bowl and the seventh into the clock-case. But the wolf found them all, and used no great ceremony; one after the other he swallowed them down his throat. The youngest, who was in the clock-case, was the only one he did not find. When the wolf had satisfied his appetite he took himself off, laid himself down under a tree in the green meadow outside, and began to sleep. Soon afterwards the old goat came home again from the forest. Ah! what a sight she saw there! The house-door stood wide open. The table, chairs and benches were thrown down, the washing-bowl lay broken to pieces, and the quilts and pillows were pulled off the bed. She sought her children, but they were nowhere to be found. She called them one after another by name, but no one answered. At last, when she came to the youngest, a soft voice cried: 'Dear mother, I am in the clock-case.' She took the kid out, and it told her that the wolf had come and had eaten all the others. Then you may imagine how she wept over her poor children.

At length in her grief she went out, and the youngest kid ran with her. When they came to the meadow, there lay the wolf by the tree and snored so loud that the branches shook. She looked at him on every side and saw that something was moving and struggling in his gorged belly. 'Ah, heavens,' she said, 'is it possible that my poor children, whom he has swallowed down for his supper, can be still alive?' Then the kid had to run home and fetch scissors and a needle and thread, and the goat cut open the monster's stomach, and hardly had she made one cut, than one little kid thrust its head out, and when she had cut farther, all six sprang out one after another, and were all still alive, and had suffered no injury whatever, for in his greediness the monster had swallowed them down whole. What rejoicing there was! They embraced their dear mother, and jumped like a tailor at his wedding. The mother, however, said: 'Now go and look for some big stones, and we will fill the wicked beast's stomach with them while he is still asleep.' Then the seven kids dragged the stones thither with all speed, and put as many of them into this stomach as they could get in; and the mother sewed him up again in the greatest haste, so that he was not aware of anything and never once stirred.

When the wolf at length had had his fill of sleep, he got on his legs, and as the stones in his stomach made him very thirsty, he wanted to go to a well to drink. But when he began to walk and to move about, the stones in his stomach knocked against each other and rattled. Then cried he:

> 'What rumbles and tumbles
> Against my poor bones?
> I thought 'twas six kids,
> But it feels like big stones.'



And when he got to the well and stooped over the water to drink, the heavy stones made him fall in, and he drowned miserably. When the seven kids saw that, they came running to the spot and cried aloud: 'The wolf is dead! The wolf is dead!' and danced for joy round about the well with their mother.

The Queen Bee

Two princes once upon a time went into the world to seek their fortunes; but they soon fell into a wasteful, foolish way of living, so that they could not return home again.

Then their brother, who was a little insignificant dwarf, went out to seek for his brothers; but when he had found them they only laughed at him, to think that he, who was so young and simple, should try to travel through the world, when they, who were so much wiser, had been unable to get on.

However, they all set out on their journey together, and came at last to an ant-hill. The two elder brothers would have pulled it down, in order to see how the poor ants in their fright would run about and carry off their eggs.

But the little dwarf said, 'Let the poor things enjoy themselves. I will not suffer you to trouble them.'

So on they went, and came to a lake where many many ducks were swimming about. The two brothers wanted to catch two, and roast them.

But the dwarf said, 'Let the poor things enjoy themselves; you shall not kill them.'

Next they came to a bees'-nest in a hollow tree, and there was so much honey that it ran down the trunk; the two brothers wanted to light a fire under the tree and kill the bees, so as to get their honey.

But the dwarf held them back, and said, 'Let the pretty insects enjoy themselves. I cannot let you burn them.'

At length the three brothers came to a castle and as they passed by the stables they saw fine horses standing there, but all were of marble, and no man was to be seen.

Then they went through all the rooms, till they came to a door on which were three locks, but in the middle of the door was a wicket, so that they could look into the next room. There they saw a little grey old man sitting at a table; and they called to him once or twice, but he did not hear: however, they called a third time, and then he rose and came out to them.

He said nothing, but took hold of them and led them to a beautiful table covered with all sorts of good things; and when they had eaten and drunk, he showed each of them to a bedchamber.

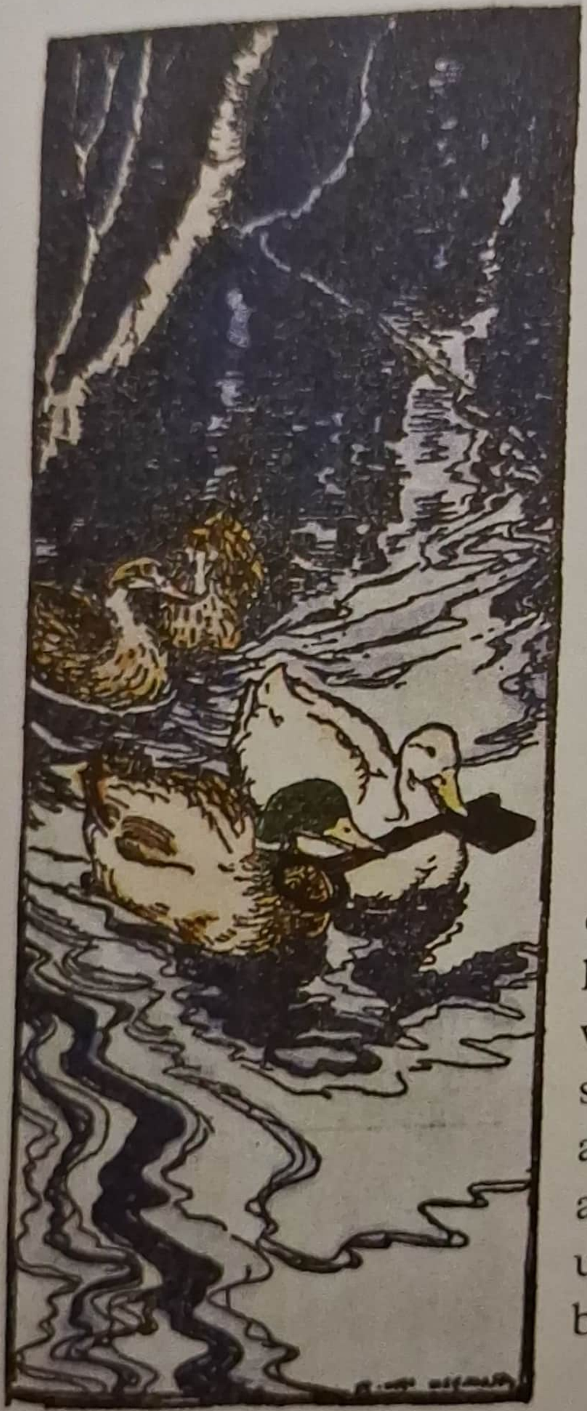
The next morning he came to the eldest and took him to a marble table, where there were three tablets, containing an account of the means by which the castle might be disenchanted.

The first tablet said: 'In the wood, under the moss, lie the thousand pearls belonging to the king's daughter; they must all be found by set of sun, but if one be missing he who seeks them will be turned into marble.'

The eldest brother set out, and sought for the pearls the whole day; but the evening came, and he had not found the first hundred, so he was turned into stone as the tablet had foretold.

The next day the second brother undertook the task; but he succeeded no better than the first; for he could only find the second hundred of the pearls; and therefore he too was turned into stone.

At last came the little dwarf's turn; and he looked in the moss; but it was so hard to find the pearls, and the job was so tiresome! So he sat down upon



a stone and cried. And as he sat there, the king of the ants (whose life he had saved) came to help him, with five thousand ants; and it was not long before they had found all the pearls and laid them in a heap.

The second tablet said: 'The key of the princess's bedchamber must be fished up out of the lake.'

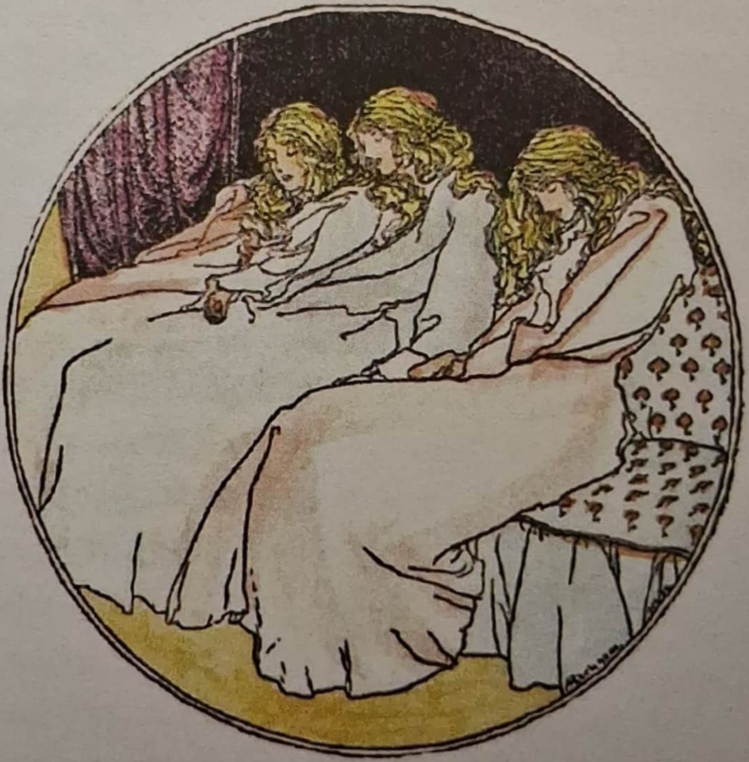
And as the dwarf came to the brink of it, he saw the two ducks whose lives he had saved swimming about; and they dived down and soon brought up the key from the bottom.

The third task was the hardest. It was to choose out the youngest and the best of the king's three daughters.

Now they were all beautiful, and all exactly alike: but he was told that the eldest had eaten a piece of sugar, the next some sweet syrup and the youngest a spoonful of honey; so he was to guess which it was that had eaten the honey.

Then came the queen of the bees, who had been saved by the little dwarf from the fire, and she tried the lips of all three; but at last she sat upon the lips of the one that had eaten the honey: and so the dwarf knew which was the youngest.

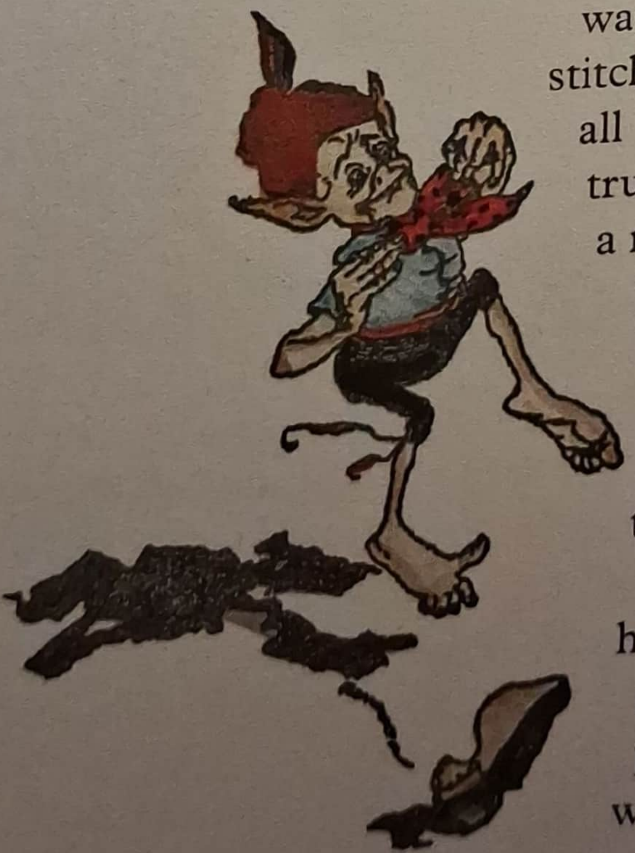
Thus the spell was broken, and all who had been turned into stones awoke, and took their proper forms. And the dwarf married the youngest and the best of the princesses, and was king after her father's death; and his two brothers married the other two sisters.



The Elves and the Shoemaker

There was once a shoemaker, who worked very hard and was very honest, but still he could not earn enough to live upon; and at last all he had in the world was gone, save just leather enough to make one pair of shoes.

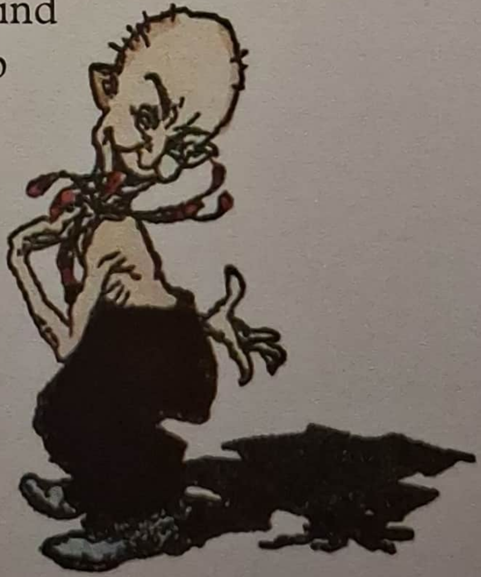
Then he cut his leather out, all ready to make up the next day, meaning to rise early in the morning to his work. His conscience was clear and his heart light amidst all his troubles; so he went peaceably to bed, left all his cares to heaven, and soon fell asleep. In the morning after he had said his prayers, he sat himself down to his work, but to his great wonder, there stood the shoes, all ready made, upon the table. The good man knew not what to say or think at such an odd thing happening. He looked at the workmanship; there was not one false stitch in the whole job; all was so neat and true, that it was quite a masterpiece.



The same day a customer came in, and the shoes suited him so well that he willingly paid a price higher than usual for them; and the poor shoemaker, with the money, bought leather enough to make two pairs more. In the evening he cut out the work, and went to bed early, that he might get up and begin betimes next day; but he was saved all the trouble, for when he got up in the morning the work was done ready to his hand. Soon in came buyers, who paid him handsomely for his goods, so that he bought leather enough for four pair more. He cut out the work again overnight and found it done in the morning, as before; and so it went on for some time: what was got ready in the evening was always done by daybreak; and the good man soon became thriving and well off again.

One evening, about Christmastime, as he and his wife were sitting over the fire chatting together, he said to her, 'I should like to sit up and watch tonight, that we may see who it is that comes and does my work for me.' The wife liked the thought; so they left a light burning, and hid themselves in a corner of the room, behind a curtain that was hung up there, and watched what would happen.

As soon as it was midnight, there came in two little naked dwarfs; and they sat themselves upon the shoemaker's bench, took up all the work that was cut out, and began to ply with their little fingers, stitching and rapping and tapping away at such a rate,



that the shoemaker was all wonder, and could not take his eyes off them. And on they went, till the job was quite done, and the shoes stood ready for use upon the table. This was long before daybreak; and then they bustled away as quick as lightning.

The next day the wife said to the shoemaker. 'These little wights have made us rich, and we ought to be thankful to them, and do them a good turn if we can. I am quite sorry to see them run about as they do; and indeed it is not very decent, for they have nothing upon their backs to keep off the cold. I'll tell you what: I will make each of them a shirt, and a coat and waistcoat, and a pair of pantaloons into the bargain; and do you make each of them a little pair of shoes.'

The thought pleased the good cobbler very much; and one evening, when all the things were ready, they laid them on the table, instead of the work that they used to cut out, and then went and hid themselves, to watch what the little elves would do.

About midnight in they came, dancing and skipping, hopped round the room, and then went to sit down to their work as usual; but when they saw the clothes lying for them, they laughed and chuckled, and seemed mightily delighted.

Then they dressed themselves in the twinkling of an eye, and danced and capered and sprang about, as merry as could be; till at last they danced out at the door, and away over the green.

The good couple saw them no more; but everything went well with them from that time forward, as long as they lived.

The Turnip

There were two brothers who were both soldiers; the one was rich and the other poor. The poor man thought he would try to better himself; so, pulling off his red coat, he became a gardener, and dug his ground well, and sowed turnips.

When the seed came up, there was one plant bigger than all the rest; and it kept getting larger and larger, and seemed as if it would never cease growing, so that it might have been called the prince of turnips – for there never was such a one seen before, and never will be such a one seen again. At last it was so big that it filled a cart, and two oxen could hardly draw it; and the gardener knew not what in the world to do with it, nor whether it would be a blessing or a curse to him.

One day he said to himself, 'What shall I do with it? If I sell it, it will bring no more than another; and for eating, the little turnips are better than this; the best thing perhaps is to carry it and give it to the king as a mark of respect.

Then he yoked his oxen, and drew the turnip to the court, and gave it to the king. 'What a wonderful thing!' said the king. 'I have seen many strange things, but such a monster as this I never saw. Where did you get the seed? Or is it only your good luck? If so, you are a true child of fortune.'

'Ah, no!' answered the gardener. 'I am no child of fortune; I am a poor soldier, who never could get enough to live upon; so I laid aside my red coat, and set to work, tilling the ground. I have a brother, who is rich, and your majesty knows him well, and all the world knows him; but because I am poor, everybody forgets me.'

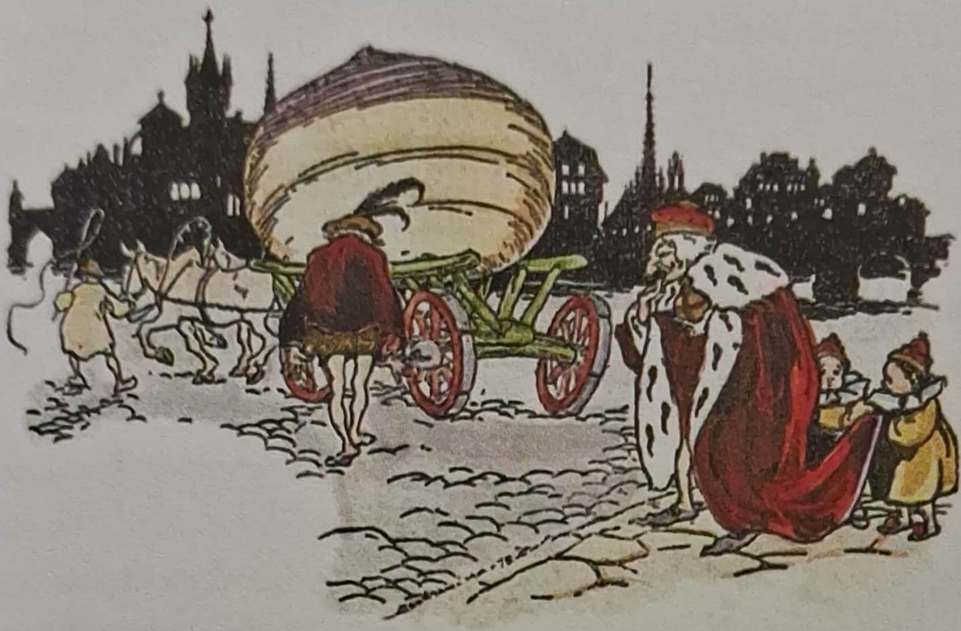
The king then took pity on him, and said, 'You shall be poor no longer. I will give you so much that you shall be even richer than your brother.' Then he gave him gold and lands and flocks, and made him so rich that his brother's fortune could not at all be compared with his.

When the brother heard of all this, and how a turnip had made the gardener so rich, he envied him sorely, and bethought him how he could contrive to get the same good fortune for himself. However, he determined to manage more cleverly than his brother, and got together a rich present of gold and fine horses for the king; and thought he must have a much larger gift in return; for if his brother had received so much for only a turnip, what must his present be worth?

The king took the gift very graciously, and said he knew not what to give in return more valuable and wonderful than the great turnip; so the soldier was forced to put it into a cart, and drag it home with him. When he reached home, he knew not upon whom to vent his rage and spite; and at length wicked thoughts came into his head, and he resolved to kill his brother.

So he hired some villains to murder him; and having shown them where to lie in ambush, he went to his brother, and said, 'Dear brother, I have found a hidden treasure; let us go and dig it up, and share it between us.' The other had no suspicions of his roguery, so they went out together, and as they were travelling along, the murderers rushed out upon him, bound him, and were going to hang him on a tree.

But while they were getting all ready, they heard the trampling of a horse at a distance, which so



frightened them that they pushed their prisoner head first into a sack, and swung him up by a cord to the tree, where they left him dangling, and ran away. Meantime he worked and worked away, till he made a hole large enough to put out his head.

When the horseman came up, he proved to be a student, a merry fellow, who was journeying along on his nag and singing as he went. As soon as the man in the sack saw him passing under the tree, he cried out, 'Good-morning! Good-morning to thee, my friend!'

The student looked about everywhere; and seeing no one, and not knowing where the voice came from, cried out, 'Who calls me?'

Then the man in the tree answered, 'Lift up thine eyes, for behold here I sit in the sack of wisdom; here have I, in a short time, learned great and wondrous things. Compared to this seat, all the learning of the schools is as empty air. A little longer, and I shall know all that man can know, and shall come forth wiser than the wisest of mankind. Here I discern the signs and motions of the heavens and the stars; the laws that control the winds; the number of the sands on the seashore; the healing of the sick; the virtues of all simples, of birds and of precious stones. Wert thou but once here, my friend, thou wouldst feel and own the power of knowledge.'

The student listened to all this and wondered much; at last he said, 'Blessed be the day and hour when I found you; cannot you contrive to let me into the sack for a little while?'

Then the other answered, as if very unwillingly, 'A little space I may allow thee to sit here, if thou wilt reward me well and entreat me kindly; but thou must tarry yet an hour below, till I have learnt some little matters that are yet unknown to me.'

So the student sat himself down and waited a while; but the time hung heavy upon him, and he begged earnestly that he might ascend forthwith, for his thirst for knowledge was great.

Then the other pretended to give way, and said, 'Thou must let the sack of wisdom descend, by untying yonder cord, and then thou shalt enter.'

So the student let him down, opened the sack, and set him free. 'Now then,' cried he, 'let me ascend quickly.'

As he began to put himself into the sack heels first, 'Wait a while,' said the gardener, 'that is not the way.'

Then he pushed him in head first, tied up the sack, and soon swung up the searcher after wisdom until he was dangling in the air.

'How is it with thee, friend?' said he. 'Dost thou not feel that wisdom comes unto thee? Rest there in peace, till thou art a wiser man than thou wert.'

So saying, he trotted off on the student's nag, and left the poor fellow to gather wisdom till somebody should come and let him down.

Clever Hans

The mother of Hans said: 'Whither away, Hans?'

Hans answered: 'To Gretel.'

'Behave well, Hans.'

'Oh, I'll behave well. Goodbye, mother.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Gretel. 'Good-day, Gretel.'

'Good-day, Hans. What do you bring that is good?'

'I bring nothing, I want to have something given me.'

Gretel presents Hans with a needle.

Hans says: 'Goodbye, Gretel.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans takes the needle, sticks it into a hay-cart, and follows the cart home.

'Good-evening, mother.'

'Good-evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'With Gretel.'

'What did you take her?'

'Took nothing; had something given me.'

'What did Gretel give you?'

'Gave me a needle.'

'Where is the needle, Hans?'

'Stuck in the hay-cart.'

'That was ill done, Hans. You should have stuck the needle in your sleeve.'

'Never mind, I'll do better next time.'

'Whither away, Hans?'

'To Gretel, mother'

'Behave well, Hans.'

'Oh, I'll behave well. Goodbye, mother.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Gretel. 'Good-day, Gretel.'

'Good-day, Hans. What do you bring that is good?'

'I bring nothing. I want to have something given to me.'

Gretel presents Hans with a knife.

'Goodbye, Gretel.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans takes the knife, sticks it in his sleeve, and goes home.

'Good-evening, mother.'

'Good-evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'With Gretel.'

'What did you take her?'

'Took her nothing; she gave me something.'

'What did Gretel give you?'

'Gave me a knife.'

'Where is the knife, Hans?'

'Stuck in my sleeve.'

'That's ill done, Hans. You should have put the knife in your pocket.'

'Never mind, will do better next time.'

'Whither away, Hans?'

'To Gretel, mother.'

'Behave well, Hans.'

'Oh, I'll behave well. Goodbye, mother.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Gretel. 'Good-day, Gretel.'

'Good-day, Hans. What good thing do you bring?'

'I bring nothing, I want something given me.'

Gretel presents Hans with a young goat.

'Goodbye, Gretel.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans takes the goat, ties its legs, and puts it in his pocket. When he gets home it is suffocated.

'Good-evening, mother.'

'Good-evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'With Gretel.'

'What did you take her?'

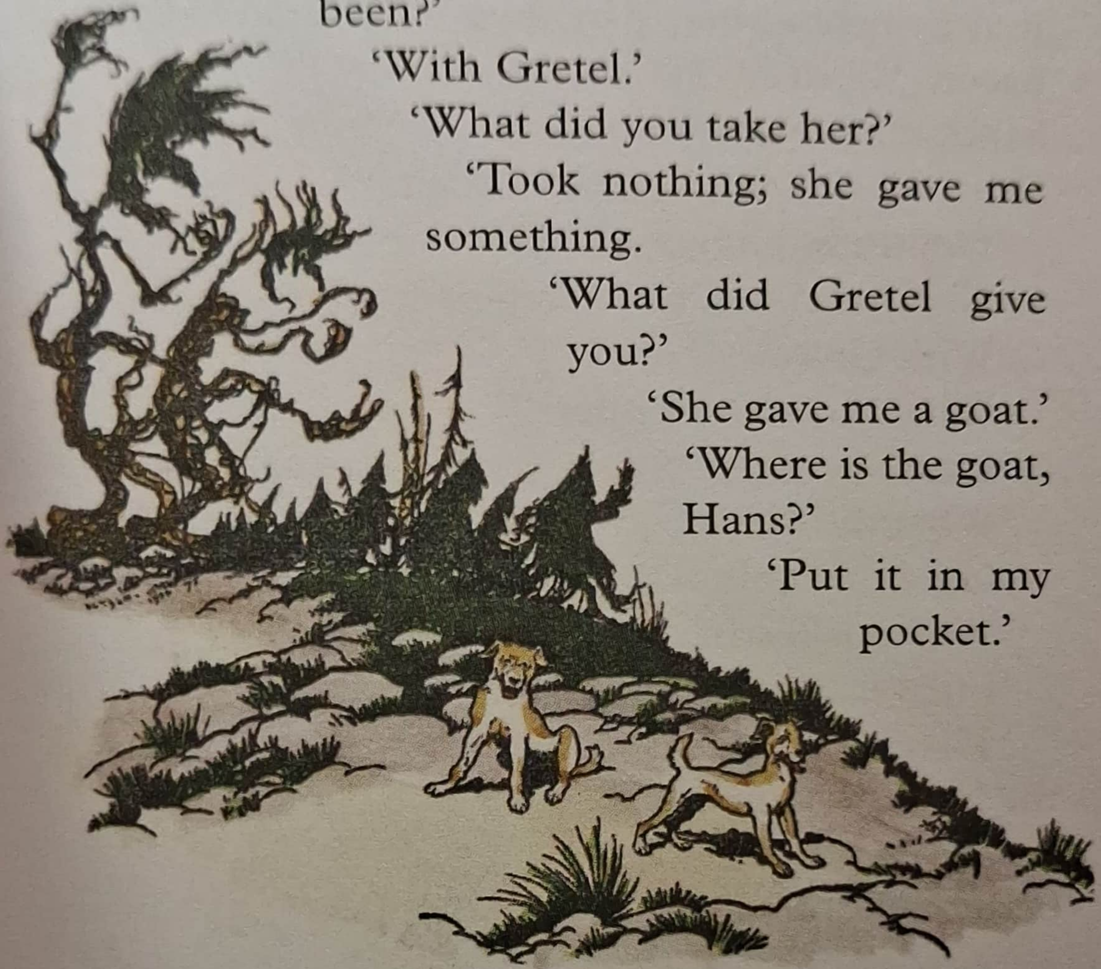
'Took nothing; she gave me something.

'What did Gretel give you?'

'She gave me a goat.'

'Where is the goat, Hans?'

'Put it in my pocket.'



'That was ill done, Hans. You should have put a rope round the goat's neck.'

'Never mind, will do better next time.'

'Whither away, Hans?'

'To Gretel, mother.'

'Behave well, Hans.'

'Oh, I'll behave well. Goodbye, mother.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Gretel. 'Good-day, Gretel.'

'Good-day, Hans. What good thing do you bring?'

'I bring nothing, I want something given me.'

Gretel presents Hans with a piece of bacon.

'Goodbye, Gretel.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans takes the bacon, ties it to a rope, and drags it away behind him. The dogs come and devour the bacon. When he gets home, he has the rope in his hand, and there is no longer anything hanging on to it.

'Good-evening, mother.'

'Good-evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'With Gretel.'

'What did you take her?'

'I took her nothing; she gave me something.

'What did Gretel give you?'

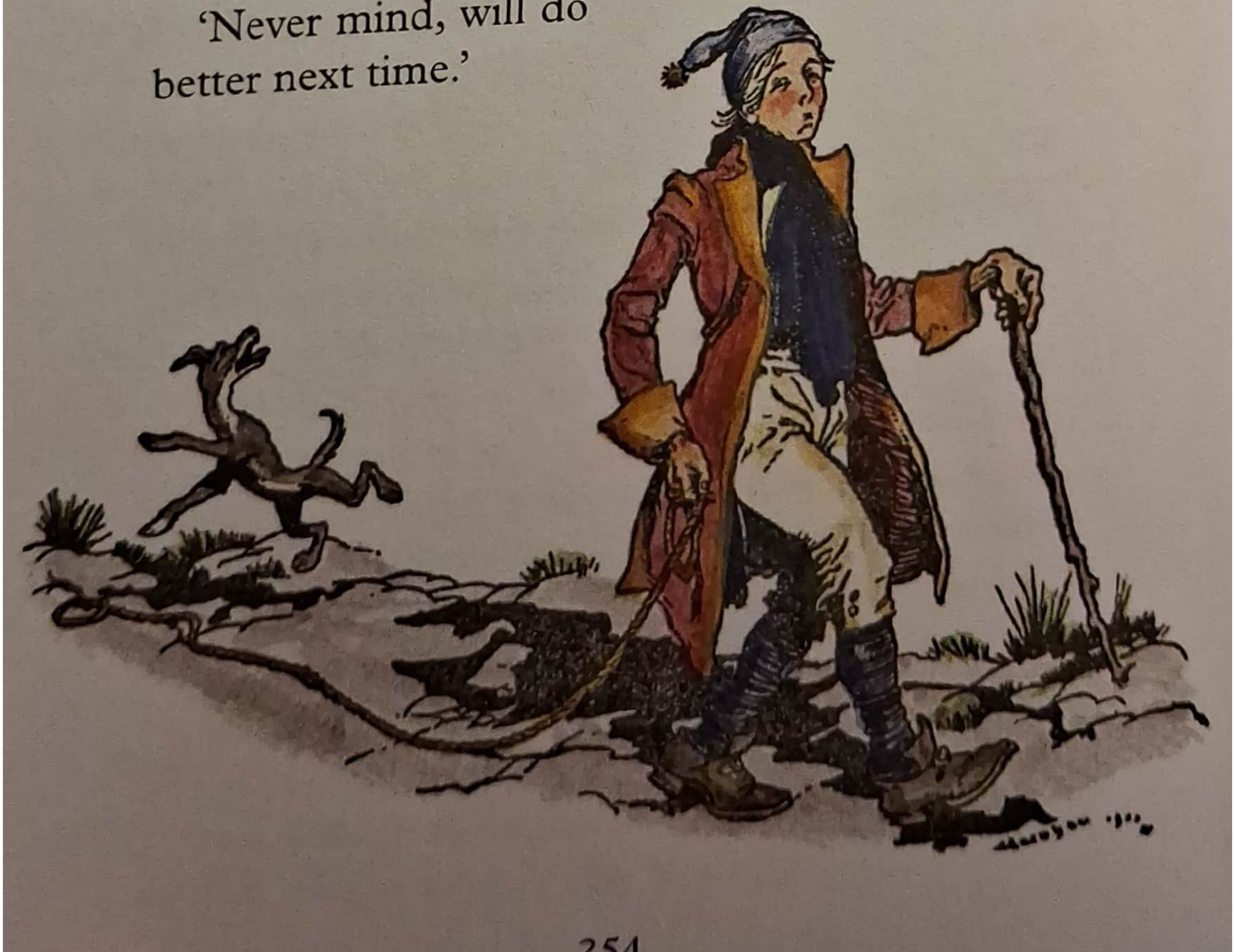
'Gave me a bit of bacon.'

'Where is the bacon, Hans?'

'I tied it to a rope, brought it home, dogs took it.'

'That was ill done, Hans. You should have carried the bacon on your head.'

'Never mind, will do better next time.'



'Whither away, Hans?'

'To Gretel, mother.'

'Behave well, Hans.'

'I'll behave well. Goodbye, mother.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Gretel. 'Good-day, Gretel.'

'Good-day, Hans. What good thing do you bring?'

'I bring nothing, but would have something given.'

Gretel presents Hans with a calf.

'Goodbye, Gretel.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans takes the calf, puts it on his head, and the calf kicks his face.

'Good-evening, mother.'

'Good-evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'With Gretel.'

'What did you take her?'

'I took nothing, but had something given me.'

'What did Gretel give you?'

'A calf.'

'Where is the calf, Hans?'

'I set it on my head and it kicked my face.'

'That was ill done, Hans. You should have led the calf, and put it in the stall.'

'Never mind, will do better next time.'

'Whither away, Hans?'

'To Gretel, mother.'

'Behave well, Hans.'

'I'll behave well. Goodbye, mother.'

'Goodbye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Gretel. 'Good-day, Gretel.'

'Good-day, Hans. What good thing do you bring?'

'I bring nothing, but would have something given.'

Gretel says to Hans: 'I will go with you.'

Hans takes Gretel, ties her to a rope, leads her to the rack, and binds her fast. Then Hans goes to his mother.

'Good-evening, mother.'

'Good-evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'With Gretel.'

'What did you take her?'

'I took her nothing.'

'What did Gretel give you?'

'She gave me nothing. She came with me.'

'Where have you left Gretel?'

'I led her by the rope, tied her to the rack, and scattered some grass for her.'

'That was ill done, Hans, you should have cast friendly eyes on her.'

'Never mind, will do better.'

Hans went into the stable, cut out all the calves' and sheep's eyes, and threw them in Gretel's face. Then Gretel became angry, tore herself loose and ran away, and never became the bride of Hans.

The Three Languages

An aged count once lived in Switzerland; he had an only son, but he was stupid, and could learn nothing. Then said the father: 'Hark you, my son, try as I will I can get nothing into your head. I will give you into the care of a celebrated master, who shall see what he can do with you.'

The youth was sent into a strange town, and remained a whole year with the master. At the end of this time, he came home again, and his father asked: 'Now, my son, what have you learnt?'

'Father, I have learnt what the dogs say when they bark.'

'Lord have mercy on us!' cried the father; 'is that all you have learnt? I will send you into another town, to another master.'

The youth was taken thither, and stayed a year with this master likewise.

When he came back the father again asked: 'My son, what have you learnt?'

'Father, I have learnt what the birds say.'

Then the father fell into a rage and said: 'Oh, you lost man, you have spent the precious time and learnt nothing; are you not ashamed to appear before my eyes? I will send you to a third master, but if you learn nothing this time also, I will no longer be your father.'

The youth remained a whole year with the third master also, and when he came home again, and his father enquired: 'My son, what have you learnt?'

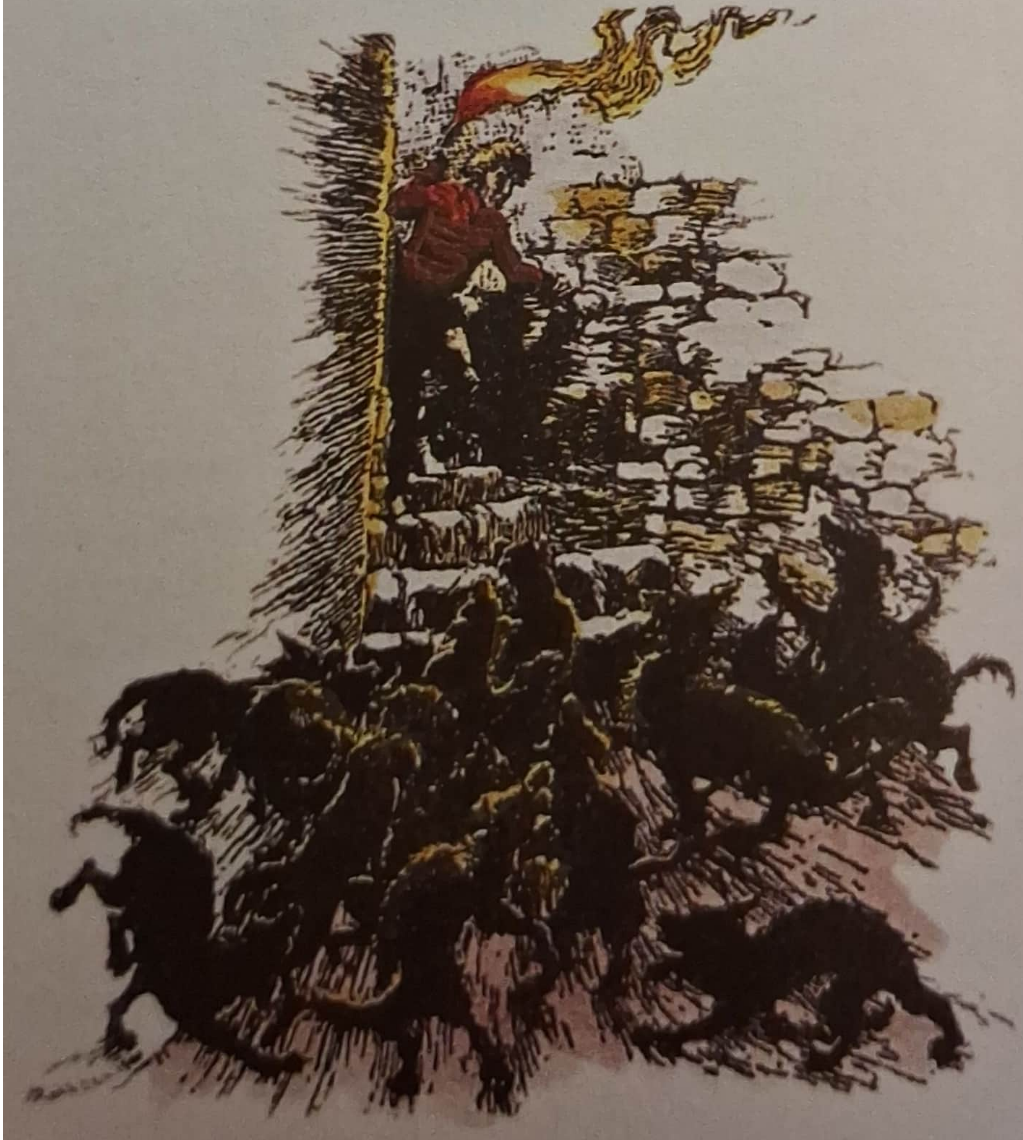
He answered: 'Dear father, I have this year learnt what the frogs croak.'

Then the father fell into the most furious anger, sprang up, called his people thither, and said: 'This man is no longer my son, I drive him forth, and command you to take him out into the forest and kill him.'

They took him forth, but when they should have killed him, they could not do it for pity, and let him go; and they cut the eyes and tongue out of a deer that they might carry them to the old man as a token.

The youth wandered on, and after some time came to a fortress where he begged for a night's lodging.

'Yes,' said the lord of the castle, 'if you will pass the night down there in the old tower, go thither; but



I warn you, it is at the peril of your life, for it is full of wild dogs, which bark and howl without stopping, and at certain hours a man has to be given to them, whom they at once devour.'

It seemed the whole district was in sorrow and dismay because of them, and yet no one could do anything to stop this.

The youth, however, was without fear, and said: 'Just let me go down to the barking dogs, and give me something that I can throw to them; they will do nothing to harm me.'

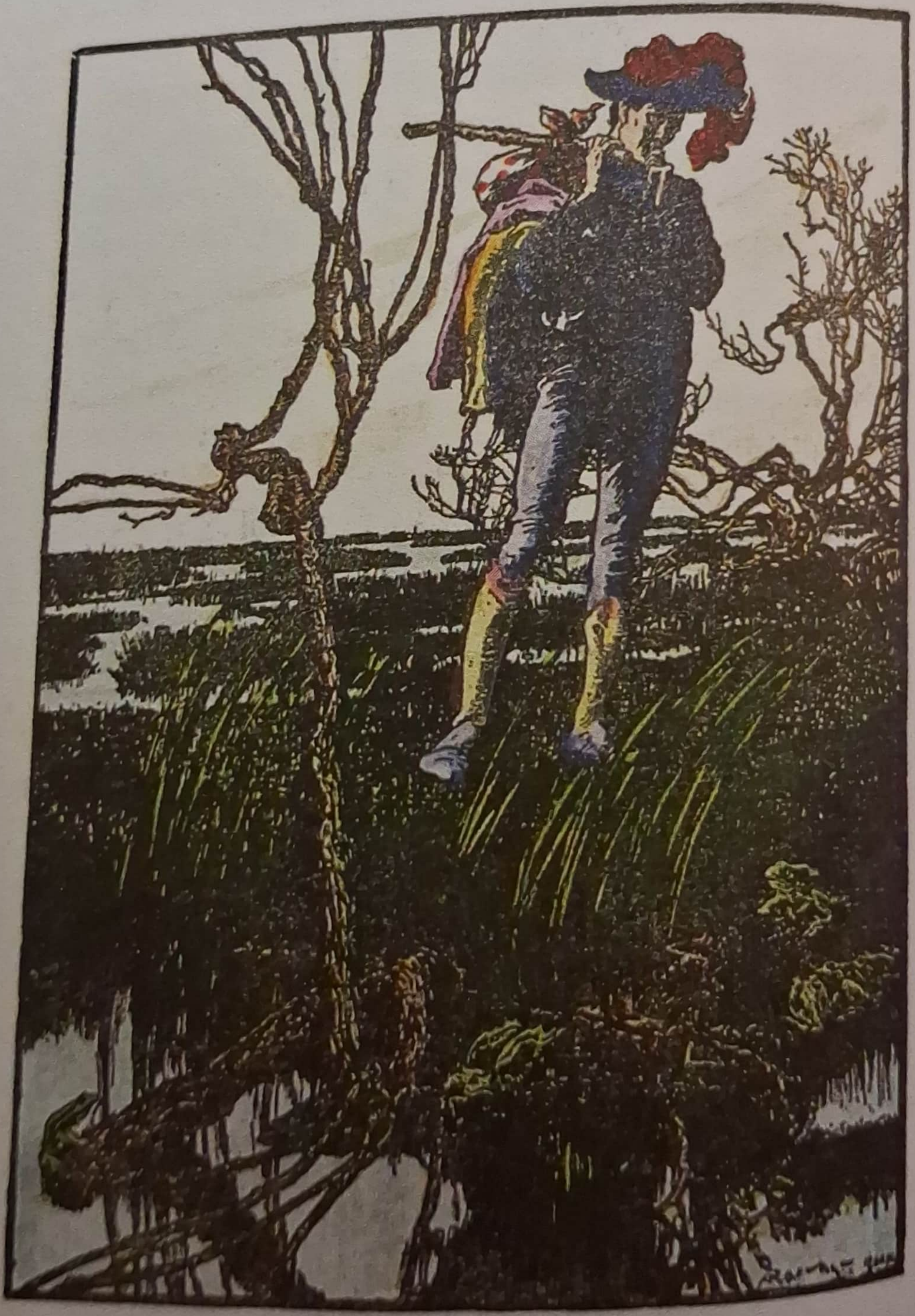
As he himself would have it so, they gave him some food for the wild animals, and led him down to the tower. When he went inside, the dogs did not bark at him, but wagged their tails quite amicably around him, ate what he set before them, and did not hurt one hair of his head.

Next morning, to the astonishment of everyone, he came out again safe and unharmed, and said to the lord of the castle: 'The dogs have revealed to me, in their own language, why they dwell there and bring evil on the land. They are bewitched, and are obliged to watch over a great treasure which is below in the tower, and they can have no rest until it is taken away; and I have likewise learnt, from their discourse, how that is to be done.'

Then all who heard this rejoiced, and the lord of the castle said he would adopt him as a son if he accomplished it successfully. He went down again, and as he knew what he had to do, he did it thoroughly, and brought a chest full of gold out with him. The howling of the wild dogs was henceforth heard no more; they had disappeared, and the country was freed from the trouble.

After some time he took it in his head that he would travel to Rome. On the way he passed by a marsh in which a number of frogs were sitting croaking. He listened to them, and when he became aware of what they were saying, he grew very thoughtful and sad.

At last he arrived in Rome, where the Pope had just died, and there was great doubt among the



cardinals as to whom they should appoint as his successor. They at length agreed that the person should be chosen as pope who should be distinguished by some divine and miraculous token. And just as that was decided on, the young count entered into the church, and suddenly two snow-white doves flew on to his shoulders and remained sitting there.

The ecclesiastics recognised therein the token from above, and asked him on the spot if he would be pope. He was undecided, and knew not if he were worthy of this, but the doves counselled him to do it, and at length he said yes.

Then was he anointed and consecrated, and thus was fulfilled what he had heard from the frogs on his way, which had so affected him, that he was to be His Holiness the Pope. Then he had to sing a mass, and did not know one word of it, but the two doves sat continually on his shoulders, and said it all in his ear.

The Fox and the Cat

It happened that the cat met the fox in a forest, and as she thought to herself: 'He is clever and full of experience, and much esteemed in the world,' she spoke to him in a friendly way. 'Good-day, dear Mr Fox, how are you? How is all with you? How are you getting on in these hard times?'

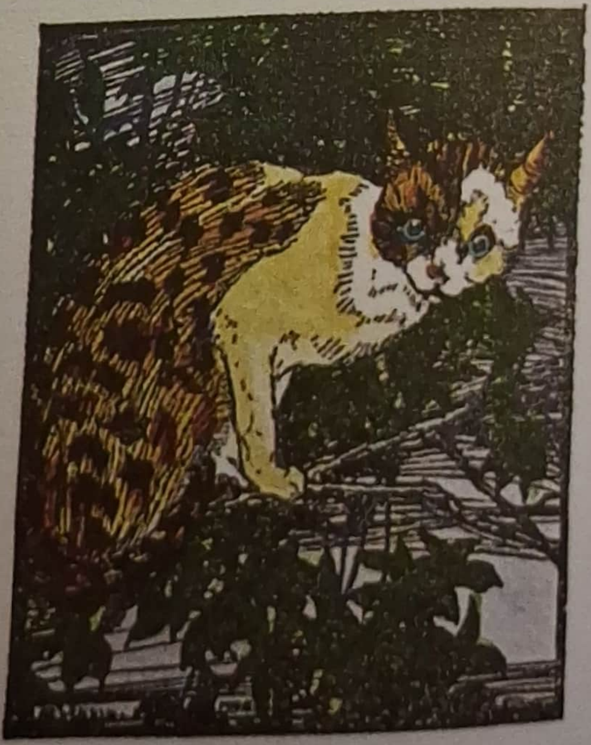
The fox, full of all kinds of arrogance, looked at the cat from head to foot, and for a long time did not know whether he would give any answer or not. At last he said: 'Oh, you wretched beard-cleaner, you piebald fool, you hungry mouse-hunter, what can you be thinking of? Have you the cheek to ask how I am getting on? What have you learnt? How many arts do you understand?'

'I understand but one,' replied the cat, modestly.

'What art is that?' asked the fox.

'When the hounds are following me, I can spring into a tree and save myself.'

'Is that all?' said the fox. 'I am master of a hundred arts, and have into the bargain a sackful of cunning. You make me sorry for you; come with me, I will teach you how people get away from the hounds.'



Just then came a hunter with four

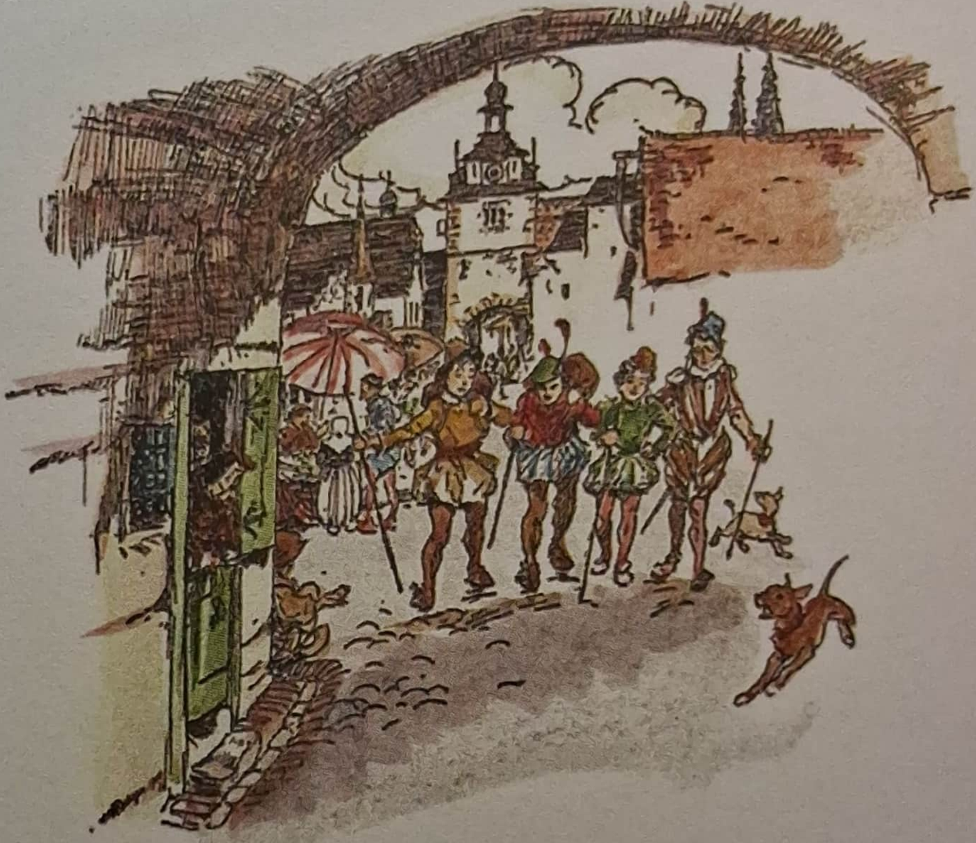
dogs. The cat sprang nimbly up a tree, and sat down at the top of it, where the branches and foliage quite concealed her.

'Open your sack, Mr Fox, open your sack,' cried the cat to him, but the dogs had already seized him, and were holding him fast.

'Ah, Mr Fox,' cried the cat, 'you with your hundred arts are left in the lurch! Had you been able to climb like me, you would not have lost your life.'

The Four Clever Brothers

'Dear children,' said a poor man to his four sons, 'I have nothing to give you; you must go out into the wide world and try your luck. Begin by learning some craft or another, and see how you can get on.' So the four brothers took their walking-sticks in their hands, and their little bundles on their shoulders, and after bidding their father goodbye, went all out at the gate together.



When they had got on some way they came to four crossways, each leading to a different country.

Then the eldest said, 'Here we must part; but this day four years hence we will come back to this spot, and in the meantime each must try what he can do for himself.'

So each brother went his way; and as the eldest was hastening on a man met him, and asked him where he was going, and what he wanted. 'I am going to try my luck in the world, and should like to begin by learning some art or trade,' answered he.

'Then,' said the man, 'go with me, and I will teach you to become the cunningest thief that ever was.'

'No,' said the other, 'that is not an honest calling, and what can one look to earn by it in the end but the gallows?'

'Oh!' said the man, 'you need not fear the gallows; for I will only teach you to steal what will be fair game: I meddle with nothing except what no one else wants or cares anything about, and only do it where no one can find you out.'

So the young man agreed to follow his trade, and he soon showed himself so clever that nothing could escape him that he had once set his mind upon.

The second brother also met a man, who, when he found out what he was setting out upon, asked him what craft he meant to follow.

'I do not know yet,' said he.

'Then come with me, and be a star-gazer. It is a noble art, for nothing can be hidden from you when once you understand the stars.'

The plan pleased him much, and he soon became such a skilful star-gazer that, when he had served out his time, his master gave him a glass, and said, 'With this you can see all that is passing in the sky and on earth, and nothing can be hidden from you.'

The third brother met a huntsman, who took him with him and taught him so well all that belonged to hunting that he became very clever in the craft of the woods; and when he came to leave, his master gave him a bow, and said, 'Whatever you shoot at with this bow you will be sure to hit.'

The youngest brother likewise met a man who asked him what he wished to do. 'Would not you like,' said he, 'to be a tailor?'

'Oh, no!' said the young man; 'sitting cross-legged from morning to night, working backwards and forwards with a needle or an iron, will never suit me.'

'Oh!' answered the man, 'that is not my sort of tailoring; come with me, and you will learn quite another kind of craft from that.'

Not knowing what better to do, he fell in with the plan, and learnt tailoring from the beginning; and when he left, his master gave him a needle and said, 'You can sew anything with this, be it as soft as an egg or as hard as steel; and the joint will be so fine that no seam will be seen.'

After the space of four years, at the time agreed upon, the four brothers met at the crossroads, and having welcomed each other, set off towards their father's home, where they told him all that had happened to them, and how each had learned some craft.

Then, one day, as they were sitting before the house under a very high tree, the father said, 'I should like to try what each of you can do in this way.'

So he looked up, and said to the second son, 'At the top of this tree there is a chaffinch's nest; tell me how many eggs there are in it.'

The star-gazer took his glass, looked up, and said, 'Five.'

'Now,' said the father to the eldest son, 'take away the eggs without letting the bird that is sitting upon them and hatching them know anything of what you are doing.'

So the cunning thief climbed up the tree, and brought away to his father the five eggs from under the bird; and it never saw or felt what he was doing, but kept sitting on at its ease.

Then the father took the eggs, and put one on each corner of the table, and the fifth in the middle, and said to the huntsman, 'Cut all the eggs in two pieces at one shot.' The huntsman took up his bow, and at one shot struck all the five eggs as his father wished.

'Now comes your turn,' said he to the young tailor; 'sew the eggs and the young birds in them together again, so neatly that the shot shall have done them no harm.'

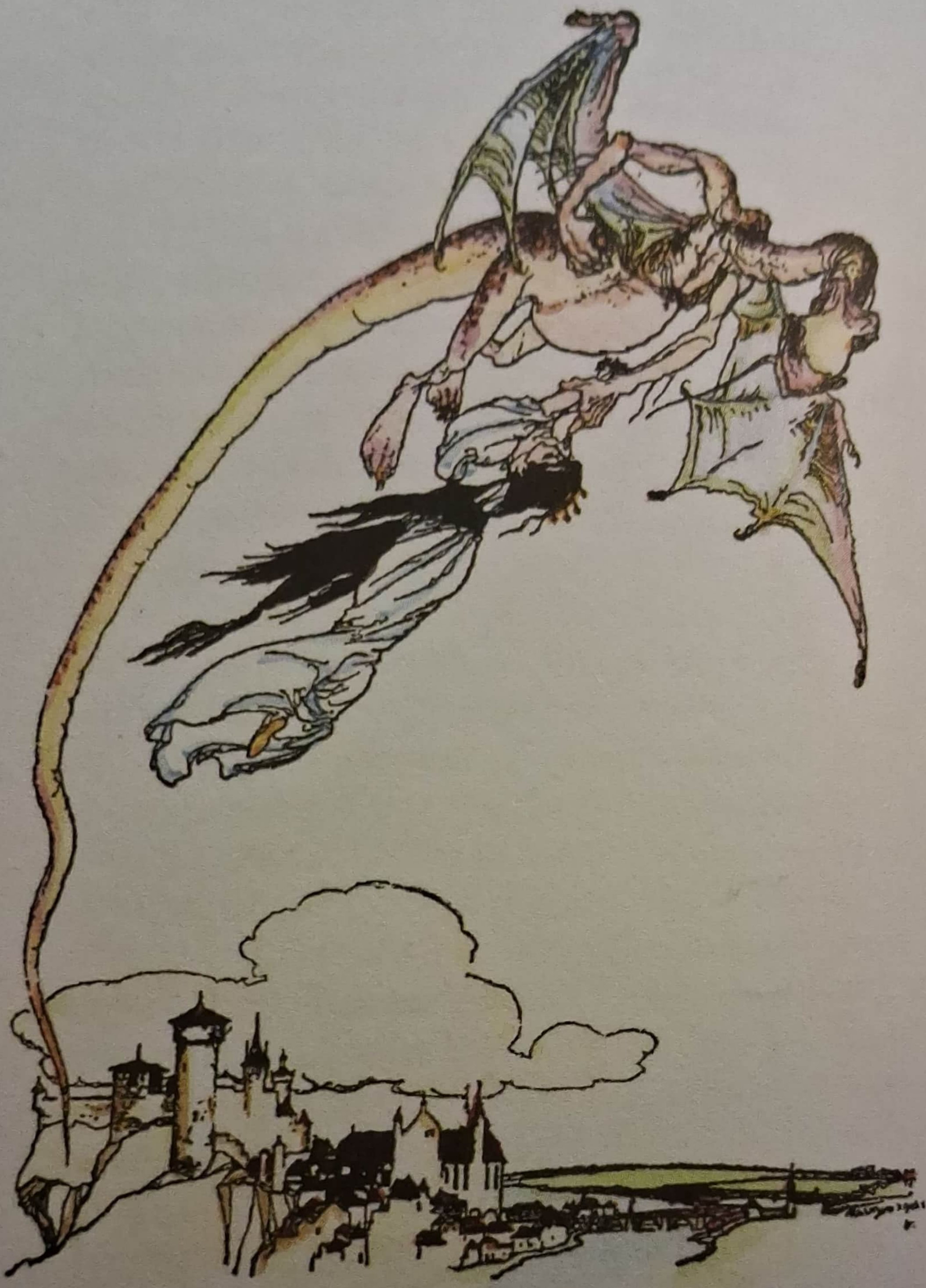
Then the tailor took his needle, and sewed the eggs as he was told; and when he had done, the thief was sent to take them back to the nest, and put them under the bird without its knowing it.

Then she went on sitting, and hatched them, and in a few days they crawled out, and had only a little red streak across their necks where the tailor had sewn them together.

'Well done, sons!' said the old man; 'you have made good use of your time, and learnt something worth the knowing; but I am sure I do not know which ought to have the prize. Oh, that a time might soon come for you to turn your skill to some account!'

Not long after this there was a great bustle in the country; for the king's daughter had been carried off by a mighty dragon, and the king mourned over his loss day and night, and made it known that whoever brought her back to him should have her for a wife.

Then the four brothers said to each other, 'Here is a chance for us; let us try what we can do.' And they agreed to see whether they could not set the princess free.



'I must first find out where she is, however,' said the star-gazer, as he looked through his glass; and he soon cried out, 'I see her afar off, sitting upon a rock in the sea, and I can spy the dragon close by, guarding her.'

Then he went to the king, and asked for a ship for himself and his brothers; and they sailed together over the sea, till they came to the right place. There they found the princess sitting, as the star-gazer had said, on the rock; and the dragon was lying asleep, with his head upon her lap. 'I dare not shoot at him,' said the huntsman, 'for I should kill the beautiful young lady also.'

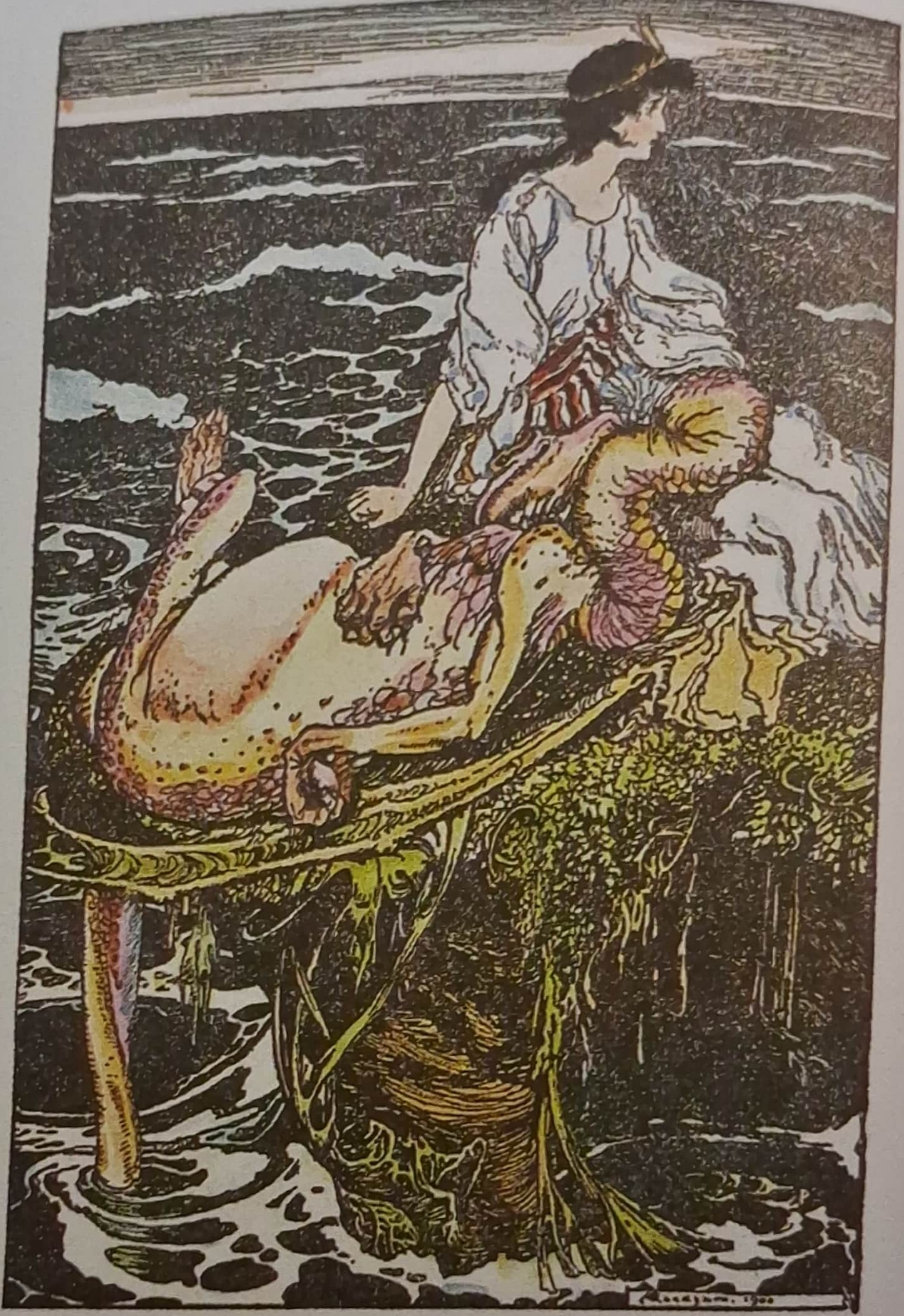
'Then I will try my skill,' said the thief, and went and stole her away from under the dragon, so quietly and gently that the beast did not know it, but went on snoring.

Then away they hastened with her, full of joy, in their boat towards the ship; but soon came the dragon roaring behind them through the air; for he awoke and missed the princess. But when he got over the boat, and wanted to pounce upon them and carry off the princess, the huntsman took up his bow and shot him straight through the heart so that he fell down dead. They were still not safe; for he was such a great beast that in his fall he overset the boat, and they had to swim in the open sea, clinging to a few planks.

So the tailor took his needle, and with a few large stitches fixed some of the planks together; and he sat down upon these, and sailed about, and gathered up all the pieces of the boat; and then tacked them together so quickly that the boat was soon ready, and they then reached the ship and got home safe.

When they had brought home the princess to her father, there was great rejoicing; and he said to the four brothers, 'One of you shall marry her, but you must settle among yourselves which it is to be.'

Then there arose a quarrel between them; and the star-gazer said, 'If I had not found the princess, all



your skill would have been of no use; therefore she ought to be mine.'

'Your seeing her would have been of no use,' said the thief, 'if I had not taken her away from the dragon; therefore she ought to be mine.'

'No, she is mine,' said the huntsman; 'for if I had not killed the dragon, he would, after all, have torn you and the princess into pieces.'

'And if I had not sewn the boat together again,' said the tailor, 'you would all have been drowned; therefore she is mine.'

Then the king put in a word, and said, 'Each of you is right; and as all of you cannot have the young lady, the best way is for none of you to have her; for the truth is, there is somebody she likes a great deal better. But to make up for your loss, I will give each of you, as a reward for his skill, half a kingdom.' So the brothers agreed that this plan would be much better than either quarrelling or marrying a lady who had no mind to have them.

And the king then gave to each half a kingdom, as he had promised; and they lived very happily the rest of their days, and took good care of their father; and somebody took better care of the young lady than to let either the dragon or one of the craftsmen have possession of her again.

Lily and the Lion

A merchant, who had three daughters, was once setting out upon a journey; but before he went he asked each daughter what gift he should bring back for her. The eldest wished for pearls; the second for jewels; but the third, who was called Lily, said, 'Dear father, bring me a rose.'

Now it was no easy task to find a rose, for it was the middle of winter; yet as she was his prettiest daughter, and was very fond of flowers, her father said he would see what he could do. So he kissed all three, and bid them goodbye.

And when the time came for him to go home, he had bought pearls and jewels for the two eldest, but he had sought everywhere in vain for the rose; and when he went into any garden and asked for such a thing, the people laughed at him, and asked him whether he thought roses grew in snow.

This grieved him very much, for Lily was his dearest child; and as he was journeying home, thinking what he should bring her, he came to a fine castle; and around the castle was a garden, in one half of which it seemed to be summertime and in the other half winter. On one side the finest flowers were in full bloom, and on the other everything looked dreary and buried in the snow. 'A lucky find!' said he, and he called to his servant and told him to go to a beautiful bed of roses that was there and bring him away one of the finest flowers.

This done, they were riding away well pleased, when up sprang a fierce lion, and roared out, 'Whoever has stolen one of my roses shall be eaten up alive!'

Then the man said, 'I knew not that the garden belonged to you; can nothing save my life?'

'No!' said the lion, 'nothing, unless you undertake to give me whatever meets you on your return home; if you agree to this, I will give you your life, and the rose too for your daughter.'

But the man was unwilling to do so and said, 'It may be my youngest daughter, who loves me most, and always runs to meet me when I go home.'

Then the servant was greatly frightened, and said, 'It may perhaps be only a cat or a dog.'

And at last the man yielded with a heavy heart, and took the rose; and said he would give the lion whatever should meet him first on his return.

And as he came near home, it was Lily, his youngest and dearest daughter, that met him; she came running, and kissed him, and welcomed him home; and when she saw that he had brought her the rose, she was still more glad.

But her father began to be very sorrowful, and to weep, saying, 'Alas, my dearest child! I have bought this flower at a high price, for I have said I would give you to a wild lion; and when he has you, he will tear you in pieces, and eat you.'

Then he told her all that had happened, and said she should not go, come what may.

But she comforted him, and said, 'Dear father, the word you have given must be kept; I will go to the lion, and soothe him; perhaps he will let me come safe home again.'

The next morning she asked the way she was to go, and took leave of her father, and went forth with a bold heart into the wood. But the lion was an enchanted prince. By day he and all his court were lions, but in the evening they took their right forms again.

And when Lily came to the castle, he welcomed her so courteously that she agreed to marry him. The wedding-feast was held, and they lived happily together a long time. The prince was only to be seen as soon as evening came, and then he held his court; but every morning he left his bride, and went away by himself, she knew not whither, till the night came again.

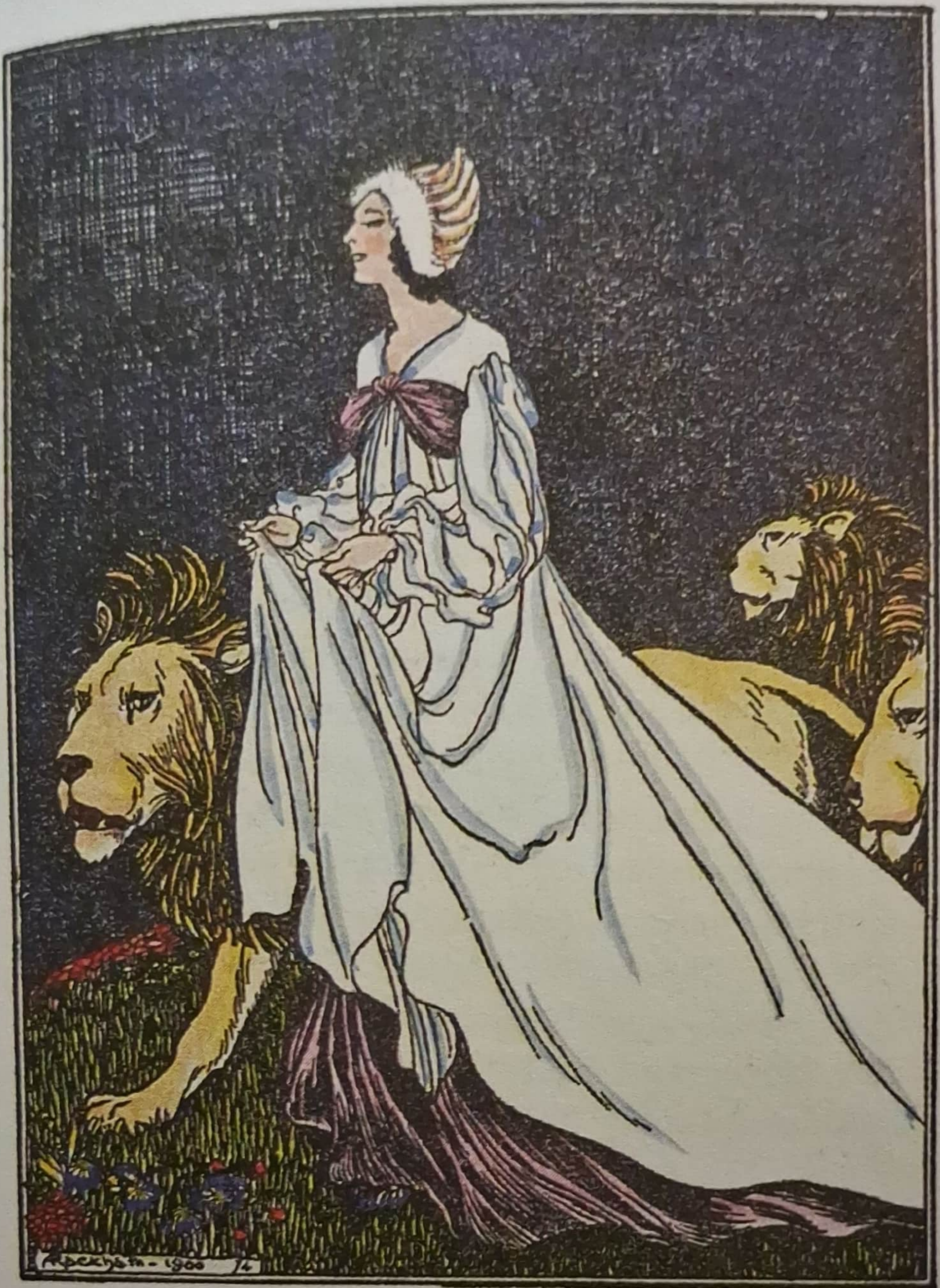
After some time he said to her, 'Tomorrow there will be a great feast in your father's house, for your eldest sister is to be married; and if you wish to go and visit her my lions shall lead you thither.'

Then she rejoiced much at the thought of seeing her father once more, and set out with the lions; and everyone was overjoyed to see her, for they had thought her dead long since. But she told them how happy she was, and stayed till the feast was over, and then went back to the wood.

Her second sister was soon after married, and when Lily was asked to go to the wedding, she said to the prince, 'I will not go alone this time – you must go with me.'

But he would not, and explained that it would be a very hazardous thing, for if the least ray of the torchlight should fall upon him his enchantment would become still worse: he should be changed into a dove, and be forced to wander about the world for seven long years.

However, she gave him no rest, and said she would take care no light should fall upon him. So at last they set out together, and took with them their little child; and she chose a large hall with thick walls for him to sit in while the wedding-torches were lighted; but, unluckily, no one saw that there was a crack



in the door. Then the wedding was held with great pomp, but as the train came from the church, and passed with the torches before the hall, a very small ray of light fell upon the prince. In a moment he disappeared, and when his wife came in and looked for him, she found only a white dove; and it said to her, 'Seven years must I fly up and down over the face of the earth, but every now and then I will let fall a white feather that will show you the way I am going; follow it, and at last you may overtake and set me free.'

This said, he flew out at the door, and poor Lily followed; and every now and then a white feather fell, and showed her the way she was to journey.

Thus she went roving on through the wide world, and looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, nor took any rest, for seven years. Then she began to be glad, and thought to herself that the time was fast coming when all her troubles should end; yet repose was still far off, for one day as she was travelling on she missed the white feather, and when she lifted up her eyes she could nowhere see the dove. 'Now,' thought she to herself, 'no aid of man can be of use to me.'

So she went to the sun and said, 'Thou shinest everywhere, on the hill's top and the valley's depth – hast thou anywhere seen my white dove?'

'No,' said the sun, 'I have not seen it; but I will give thee a casket – open it when thy hour of need comes.'

So she thanked the sun, and went on her way till eventide; and when the moon arose, she cried unto it, and said, 'Thou shinest through the night, over field and grove – hast thou nowhere seen my white dove?'

'No,' said the moon, 'I cannot help thee; but I will give thee an egg – break it when need comes.'

Then she thanked the moon, and went on till the night-wind blew; and she raised up her voice to it, and said, 'Thou blowest through every tree and under every leaf – hast thou not seen my white dove?'

'No,' said the night-wind, 'but I will ask three other winds; perhaps they have seen it.'

Then the east wind and the west wind came, and said they too had not seen it, but the south wind said, 'I have seen the white dove – he has fled to the Red Sea, and is changed once more into a lion, for the seven years are passed away, and there he is fighting with a dragon; and the dragon is an enchanted princess, who seeks to separate him from you.'

Then the night-wind said, 'I will give thee counsel. Go to the Red Sea; on the right shore stand many rods: count them, and when thou comest to the eleventh, break it off, and smite the dragon with it; and so the lion will have the victory, and both of them will appear to you in their own forms.

'Then look round and thou wilt see a winged griffin, sitting by the Red Sea; jump on to his back with thy beloved one as quickly as possible, and he will carry you over the waters to your home. I will also give thee this nut,' continued the night-wind. 'When you are halfway over, throw it down, and out of the waters will immediately spring up a high nut tree on which the griffin will be able to rest, otherwise he would not have the strength to bear you the whole way; if, therefore, thou dost forget to throw down the nut, he will let you both fall into the sea.'

So our poor wanderer went forth, and found all as the night-wind had said; and she plucked the eleventh rod, and smote the dragon, and the lion forthwith became a prince and the dragon a princess again.

But no sooner was the princess released from the spell, than she seized the prince by the arm and sprang on to the griffin's back, and went off carrying the prince away with her.

Thus the unhappy traveller was again forsaken and forlorn; but she took heart and said, 'As far as the wind blows, and so long as the cock crows, I will journey on till I find him once again.'

She went on for a long, long way, till at length she came to the castle whither the princess had carried the prince; and there was a feast got ready, and she heard that the wedding was about to be held. 'Heaven aid me now!' said she; and she took the casket that the sun had given her, and found that within it lay a dress as dazzling as the sun itself.

So she put it on, and went into the palace, and all the people gazed upon her; and the dress pleased the bride so much that she asked whether it was to be sold. 'Not for gold and silver,' said she, 'but for flesh and blood.'

The princess asked what she meant, and she said, 'Let me speak with the bridegroom this night in his chamber, and I will give thee the dress.'

At last the princess agreed, but she told her chamberlain to give the prince a sleeping draught, that he might not hear or see her. When evening came, and the prince had fallen asleep, she was led into his chamber, and she sat herself down at his feet, and said: 'I have followed thee seven years. I have been to the sun, the moon, and the night-wind, to seek thee, and at last I have helped thee to overcome the dragon. Wilt thou then forget me quite?'

But the prince all the time slept so soundly, that her voice only passed over him, and seemed like the whistling of the wind among the fir trees.

Then poor Lily was led away, and forced to give up the golden dress; and when she saw that there was no help for her, she went out into a meadow, and sat herself down and wept.

But as she sat she bethought herself of the egg that the moon had given her; and when she broke it, there ran out a hen and twelve chickens of pure gold, that played about, and then nestled under the old one's wings, so as to form the most beautiful sight in the world.

And she rose up and drove them before her, till the bride saw them from her window, and was so pleased that she came forth and asked her if she would sell the brood. 'Not for gold or silver, but for flesh and blood: let me again this evening speak with the bridegroom in his chamber, and I will give thee the whole brood.'

Then the princess thought to betray her as before, and agreed to what she asked; but when the prince went to his chamber he asked the chamberlain why the wind had whistled so in the night. And the chamberlain told him all – how he had given him a sleeping draught, and how a poor maiden had come and spoken to him in his chamber, and was to come again that night.

Then the prince took care to throw away the sleeping draught; and when Lily came and began again to tell him what woes had befallen her, and how faithful and true to him she had been, he knew his beloved wife's voice, and sprang up, and said, 'You have awakened me as from a dream, for the strange princess had thrown a spell around me, so that I had altogether forgotten you; but heaven hath sent you to me in a lucky hour.'

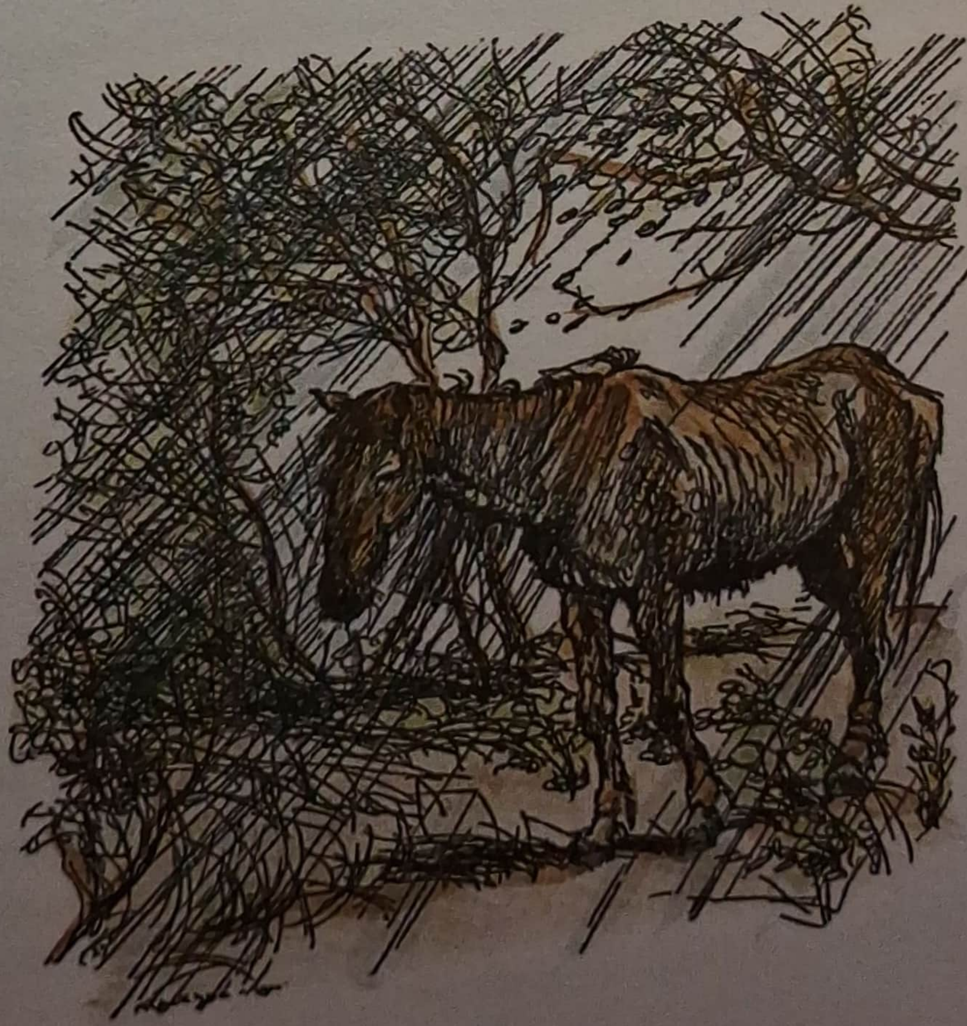
And they stole away out of the palace by night unawares, and seated themselves on the griffin, who flew back with them over the Red Sea.

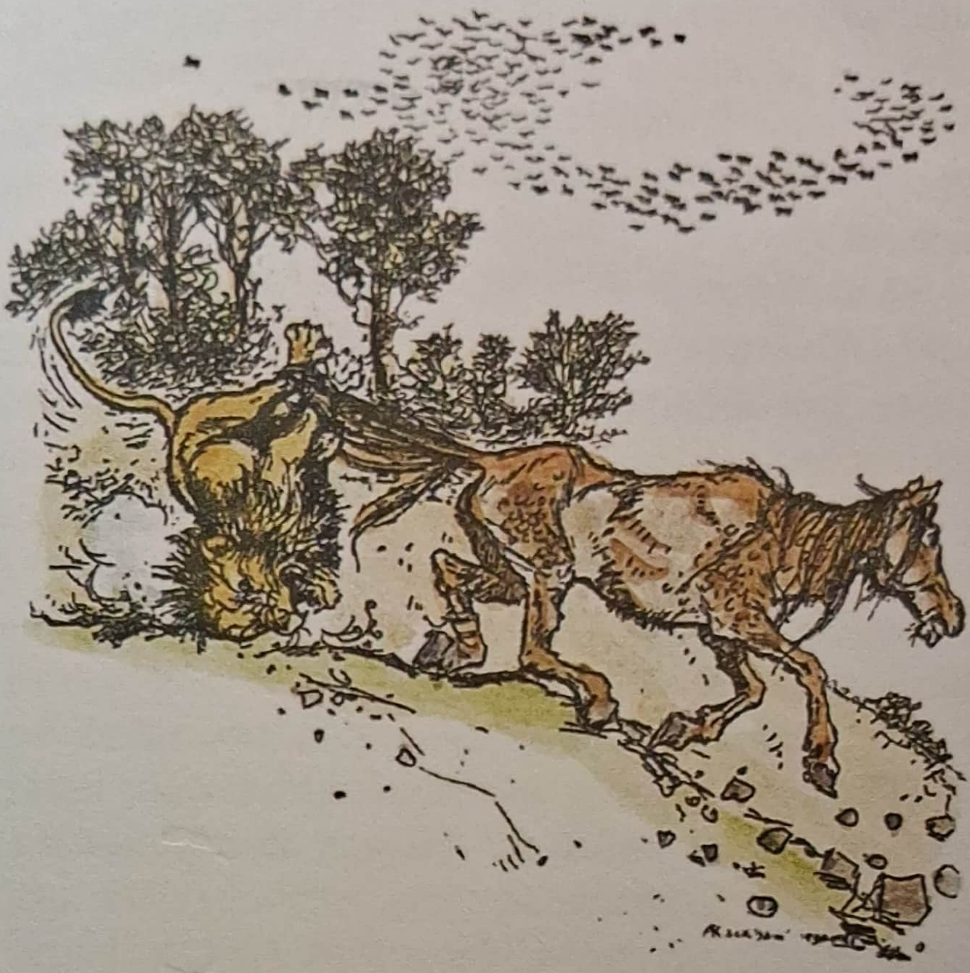
When they were halfway across Lily let the nut fall into the water, and immediately a large nut tree arose from the sea, whereon the griffin rested for a while, and then carried them safely home. There they found their child, now grown up to be comely and fair; and after all their troubles they lived happily together to the end of their days.

The Fox and the Horse

A farmer had a horse that had been an excellent and faithful servant to him: but he was now grown too old to work; so the farmer would give him nothing more to eat, and said, 'I want you no longer, so take yourself off out of my stable; I shall not take you back again until you are stronger than a lion.' Then he opened the door and turned him adrift.

The poor horse was very melancholy, and wandered up and down in the wood, seeking some little shelter from the cold wind and rain. Presently a fox met him: 'What's the matter, my friend?' said he, 'why do you hang down your head and look so lonely and woebegone?'





'Ah!' replied the horse, 'justice and avarice never dwell in the same house; my master has forgotten all that I have done for him so many years, and because I can no longer work he has turned me adrift, and says unless I become stronger than a lion he will not take me back again; what chance can I have of that? He knows I have none, or he would not talk so.'

However, the fox bid him be of good cheer, and said, 'I will help you; lie down there, stretch yourself out quite stiff, and pretend to be dead.' The horse did as he was told, and the fox went straight to the lion who lived in a cave close by, and said to him, 'A little way off lies a dead horse; come with me and you may make an excellent meal of his carcase.' The lion was greatly pleased, and set off immediately;

and when they came to the horse, the fox said, 'You will not be able to eat him comfortably here; I'll tell you what – I will tie you fast to his tail, and then you can draw him to your den, and eat him at your leisure.'

This advice pleased the lion, so he laid himself down quietly for the fox to make him fast to the horse. But the fox managed to tie his legs together and bound all so hard and fast that with all his strength he could not set himself free. When the work was done, the fox clapped the horse on the shoulder, and said, 'Jip, Dobbin! Jip!' Then up he sprang, and moved off, dragging the lion behind him. The beast began to roar and bellow, till all the birds of the wood flew away for fright; but the horse let him sing on, and made his way quietly over the fields to his master's house.

'Here he is, master,' said he. 'I have got the better of him;' and when the farmer saw his old servant, his heart relented, and he said, 'Thou shalt stay in thy stable and be well taken care of.' And so the poor old horse had plenty to eat, and lived – till he died.

The Blue Light

There was once upon a time a soldier who for many years had served the king faithfully, but when the war came to an end he could serve no longer because of the many wounds which he had received. The king said to him: 'You may return to your home, I need you no longer; and you will not receive any more money, for he only receives wages who renders me service for them.'

Then the soldier, not knowing how to earn a living, went away greatly troubled, and walked the whole day, until in the evening he entered a forest. When darkness came on, he saw a light and it led him to a house wherein lived a witch. 'Do give me one night's lodging, and a little to eat and drink,' said he to her, 'or I shall starve.'

'Oho!' she answered, 'who gives anything to a runaway soldier? Yet I will be compassionate, and take you in, if you will do what I wish.'

'What do you wish?' said the soldier.

'That you should dig all round my garden for me tomorrow.'

The soldier consented, and next day laboured with all his strength, but could not finish it by the evening.

'I see well enough,' said the witch, 'that you can do no more today, but I will keep you yet another night, in payment for which you must tomorrow chop me a load of wood, and chop it small.'

The soldier spent the whole day in doing it, and in the evening the witch proposed that he should stay one night more.

'Tomorrow, you shall only do me a very trifling piece of work. Behind my house there is an old dry well into which my light has fallen; it burns blue, and never goes out, and you shall bring it up again.'

Next day the old woman took him to the well, and let him down in a basket. He found the blue light, and made her a signal to draw him up again. She did draw him up, but when he came near the edge, she stretched down her hand and wanted to take the blue light away from him.

'No,' said he, perceiving her evil intention, 'I will not give you the light until I am standing with both feet upon the ground.' The witch fell into a passion, let him fall again into the well, and went away.

The poor soldier fell without injury on the moist ground, and the blue light went on burning, but of what use was that to him? He saw very well that he could not escape death. He sat for a while very sorrowfully, then suddenly he felt in his pocket and found his tobacco pipe, which was still half full. 'This shall be my last pleasure,' thought he, pulled it out, lit it at the blue light and began to smoke.

When the smoke had circled about the cavern, suddenly a little black dwarf stood before him, and said: 'Lord, what are your commands?'

'What are my commands?' queried the soldier, quite astonished.

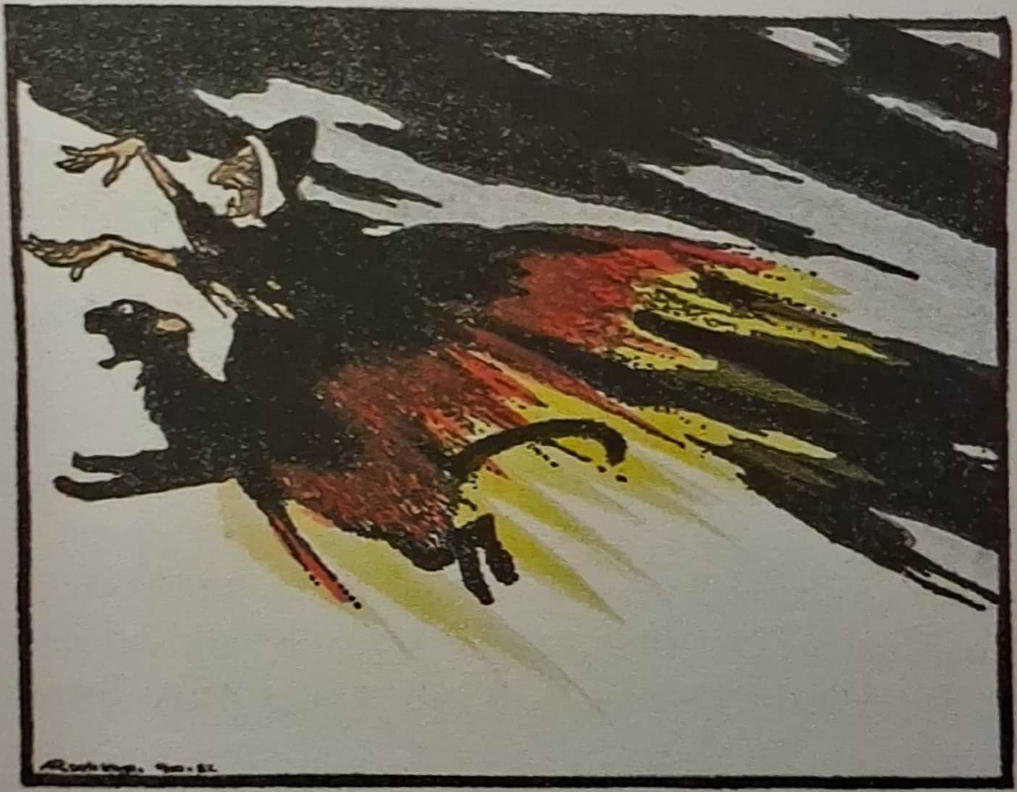
'I must do everything you bid me,' said the little man.

'Good,' said the soldier; 'then in the first place help me out of this well.'

The little man took him by the hand, and led him through an underground passage, but he did not forget to take the blue light with him. On the way the dwarf showed him the treasures which the witch had collected and hidden there, and the soldier took as much gold as he could carry.

When he was above, he said to the little man: 'Now go and bind the old witch, and carry her before the judge.'

In a short time she came by like the wind, riding on a wild tomcat and screaming frightfully. Nor was it long before the little man reappeared. 'It is all done,' said he, 'and the witch is already hanging on the gallows. What further commands has my lord?' enquired the dwarf.



'At this moment, none,' answered the soldier; 'you can return home, only be at hand immediately, if I summon you.'

'Nothing more is needed than that you should light your pipe at the blue light, and I will appear before you at once.' Thereupon he vanished from his sight.

The soldier returned to the town from which he came. He went to the best inn, ordered himself handsome clothes, and then bade the landlord furnish him a room as handsomely as possible. When it was ready and the soldier had taken possession of it, he summoned the little black manikin and said: 'I have served the king faithfully, but he has dismissed me, and left me to hunger, and now I want to take my revenge.'

'What am I to do?' asked the little man.

'Late at night, when the king's daughter is in bed, bring her here in her sleep and she shall do servant's work for me.'

The manikin said: 'That is an easy thing for me to do, but a very dangerous thing for you, for if it is discovered, you will fare ill.'

When twelve o'clock had struck, the door sprang open, and the manikin carried in the princess.

'Aha! are you there?' cried the soldier. 'Get to your work at once! Fetch the broom and sweep the chamber.'

When she had done this, he ordered her to come to his chair, and then he stretched out his feet and said: 'Pull off my boots,' and then he threw them in her face, and made her pick them up again, and clean and brighten them.

She, however, did everything he bade her, without opposition, silently and with half-shut eyes. When the first cock crowed, the manikin carried her back to the royal palace, and laid her in her bed.

Next morning when the princess arose she went to her father and told him that she had had a very strange dream. 'I was carried through the streets with the rapidity of lightning,' said she, 'and taken into a soldier's room, and I had to wait upon him like a servant, sweep his room, clean his boots, and do all kinds of menial work. It was only a dream, and yet I am just as tired as if I really had done everything.'

'The dream may have been true,' said the king. 'I will give you a piece of advice. Fill your pocket full of peas, and make a small hole in the lining; then if you are carried away again they will fall out and leave a track in the streets.'

But, unseen by the king, the manikin was standing beside him when he said that, and heard all. At night when the sleeping princess was again carried through the streets, some peas certainly did fall out of her pocket, but they made no track, for the crafty manikin had just before scattered peas in every street there was. And again the princess was compelled to do servant's work until cock-crow.

Next morning the king sent his people out to seek the track, but it was all in vain, for in every street poor children were sitting, picking up peas, and saying: 'It must have rained peas, last night.'

'We must think of something else,' said the king. 'Keep your shoes on when you go to bed, and before you come back from the place where you are taken, hide one of them there. I will soon contrive to find it.'

The black manikin heard this plot, and at night when the soldier again ordered him to bring the princess, revealed it to him, and told him that he knew of no expedient to counteract this stratagem, and that if the shoe were found in the soldier's house it would go badly with him.

'Do what I bid you,' replied the soldier; and again this third night the princess was obliged to work like a servant, but before she went away, she hid her shoe under the bed.

Next morning the king had the entire town searched for his daughter's shoe. It was found at the soldier's, and the soldier himself, who at the entreaty of the dwarf had gone outside the gate, was soon brought back, and thrown into prison.

In his flight he had forgotten the most valuable things he had, the blue light and the gold, and had only one ducat in his pocket. And now, loaded with chains, he was standing at the window of his dungeon, when he chanced to see one of his comrades passing by.

The soldier tapped at the pane of glass, and when this man came up, said to him: 'Be so kind as to fetch me the small bundle I have left lying in the inn, and I will give you a ducat for doing it.'

His comrade ran thither and brought him what he wanted. As soon as the soldier was alone again, he lighted his pipe and summoned the black manikin.

'Have no fear,' said the latter to his master. 'Go wheresoever they take you, and let them do what they will, only take the blue light with you.'

Next day the soldier was tried, and though he had done nothing wicked, the judge condemned him to death.

When he was led forth to die, he begged a last favour of the king.

'What is it?' asked the king.

'That I may smoke one more pipe on my way.'

'You may smoke three,' answered the king, 'but do not imagine that I will spare your life.'

Then the soldier pulled out his pipe and lighted it at the blue light, and as soon as a few wreaths of smoke had ascended, the manikin was there with a small cudgel in his hand, and said: 'What does my lord command?'

'Strike down to earth that false judge there, and his constable, and spare not the king who has treated me so ill.'

Then the manikin fell on them like lightning, darting this way and that way, and whosoever was so much as touched by his cudgel fell to earth, and did not venture to stir again. The king was terrified; he threw himself on the soldier's mercy, and merely to be allowed to live at all, gave him his kingdom for his own, and his daughter to wife.

The Raven

There was once a queen who had a little daughter, still too young to run alone. One day the child was very troublesome, and the mother could not quiet it, do what she would. She grew impatient, and seeing the ravens flying round the castle, she opened the window, and said: 'I wish you were a raven and would fly away, then I should have a little peace.' Scarcely were the words out of her mouth before the child in her arms was turned into a raven, and flew away from her through the open window. The bird took its flight to a dark wood and remained there for a long time, and meanwhile the parents could hear nothing of their child.

Long after this, a man was making his way through the wood when he heard a raven calling, and he followed the sound of the voice. As he drew near, the raven said, 'I am by birth a king's daughter, but am now under the spell of some enchantment; you can, however, set me free.'

'What am I to do?' he asked.

She replied, 'Go farther into the wood until you come to a house wherein lives an old woman; she will offer you food and drink, but you must not partake of either; if you do, you will fall into a deep sleep, and will not be able to help me. In the garden behind the house is a large tan-heap, and on that you must stand and watch for me. I shall drive there in my carriage at two o'clock in the afternoon for three successive days; the first day it will be drawn by four white, the second by four chestnut, and the last by four black horses; but if you fail to keep awake and I find you sleeping, I shall not be set free.'

The man promised to do all that she wished, but the raven said, 'Alas! I know even now that you will take something from the woman and be unable to save me.' The man assured her again that he would on no account touch a thing to eat or drink.

When he came to the house and went inside, the old woman met him, and said, 'Poor man! How tired you are! Come in and rest and let me give you something to eat and drink.'

'No,' answered the man, 'I will neither eat not drink.'

But she would not leave him alone, and urged him saying, 'If you will not eat anything, at least you might take a draught of wine; one drink counts for nothing,' and at last he allowed himself to be persuaded, and drank.

As it drew towards the appointed hour, he went outside into the garden and mounted the tan-heap to await the raven. Suddenly a feeling of fatigue came over him, and unable to resist it, he lay down for a little while, fully determined, however, to keep awake; but in another minute his eyes closed of their own accord, and he fell into such a deep sleep, that all the noises in the world would not have awakened him.

At two o'clock the raven came driving along, drawn by her four white horses; but even before she reached the spot, she said to herself, sighing, 'I know he has fallen asleep.' When she entered the garden, there she found him as she had feared, lying on the tan-heap, fast asleep. She got out of her carriage and went to him; she called him and shook him; but it was all in vain, he still continued sleeping.

The next day at noon, the old woman came to him again with food and drink which he at first refused. At last, overcome by her persistent entreaties that he should take something, he lifted the glass and drank again.

Towards two o'clock he went into the garden and on to the tan-heap to watch for the raven. He had not been there long before he began to feel so tired that his limbs seemed hardly able to support him, and he could not stand upright any longer; so again he lay down and fell fast asleep. As the raven drove along her four chestnut horses, she said sorrowfully to herself, 'I know he has fallen asleep.' She went as before to look for him, but he slept, and it was impossible to awaken him.

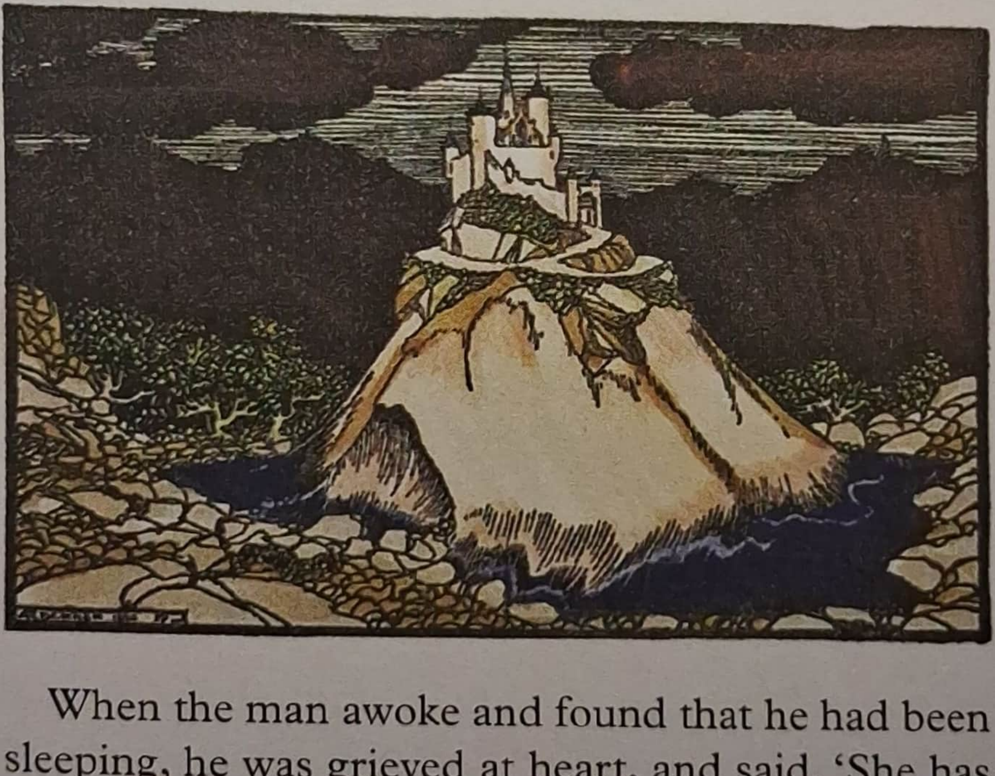
The following day the old woman said to him, 'What is this? You are not eating or drinking anything, do you want to kill yourself?'

He answered, 'I may not and will not either eat or drink.'

But she put down the dish of food and the glass of wine in front of him, and when he smelt the wine, he was unable to resist the temptation, and took a deep draught.

When the hour came round again he went as usual on to the tan-heap in the garden to await the king's daughter, but he felt even more overcome with weakness than on the two previous days, and throwing himself down, he slept like a log. At two o'clock the raven could be seen approaching, and this time her coachman and everything about her, as well as her horses, were black.

She was sadder than ever as she drove along, and said mournfully, 'I know he has fallen asleep, and will not be able to set me free.' She found him sleeping heavily, and all her efforts to awaken him were of no avail. Then she placed beside him a loaf, and some meat, and a flask of wine, of such a kind that, however much he took of them, they would never grow less. After that she drew a gold ring, on which her name was engraved, off her finger, and put it upon one of his. Finally, she laid a letter near him, in which, after giving him particulars of the food and drink she had left for him, she finished with the following words: 'I see that as long as you remain here you will never be able to set me free; if, however, you still wish to do so, come to the golden castle of Stromberg; this is well within your power to accomplish.' She then returned to her carriage and drove to the golden castle of Stromberg.



When the man awoke and found that he had been sleeping, he was grieved at heart, and said, 'She has no doubt been here and driven away again, and it is now too late for me to save her.' Then his eyes fell on the things which were lying beside him; he read the letter, and knew from it all that had happened. He rose up without delay, eager to start on his way and to reach the castle of Stromberg, but he had no idea in which direction he ought to go. He travelled about a long time in search of it and came at last to a dark forest, through which he went on walking for fourteen days and still could not find a way out. Once more the night came on, and worn out he lay down under a bush and fell asleep.

Again the next day he pursued his way through the forest, and that evening, thinking to rest again, he lay down as before, but he heard such a howling and wailing that he found it impossible to sleep. He waited till it was darker and people had begun to light up their houses, and then seeing a little glimmer ahead of him, he went towards it.

He found that the light came from a house which looked smaller than it really was, from the contrast of its height with that of an immense giant who stood in front of it. He thought to himself, 'If the giant sees me going in, my life will not be worth much.' However, after a while he summoned up courage and went forward.

When the giant saw him, he called out, 'It is lucky for me that you have come, for I have not had anything to eat for a long time. I can have you now for my supper.'

'I would rather you let me alone,' said the man, 'for I do not willingly give myself up to be eaten; if you are wanting food, I have enough to satisfy your hunger.'

'If that is so,' replied the giant, 'I will leave you in peace; I only thought of eating you because I had nothing else.'

So they went indoors together and sat down, and the man brought out the bread, meat, and wine, which although he had eaten and drunk of them, were still unconsumed. The giant was pleased with the good cheer, and ate and drank to his heart's content.

When he had finished his supper the man asked him if he could direct him to the castle of Stromberg. The giant said, 'I will look on my map; on it are marked all the towns, villages and houses.'

So he fetched his map, and looked for the castle, but could not find it. 'Never mind,' he said, 'I have larger maps upstairs in the cupboard, we will look on those,' but they searched in vain, for the castle was not marked even on them. The man now thought he should like to continue his journey, but the giant begged him to remain for a day or two longer until the return of his brother, who was away in search of provisions.

When the brother came home, they asked him about the castle of Stromberg, and he told them he would look on his own maps as soon as he had eaten and appeased his hunger. Accordingly, when he had finished his supper, they all went up together to his room and looked through his maps, but the castle was not to be found. Then he fetched other older maps, and they went on looking for the castle until at last they found it, but it was many thousand miles away.

'How shall I be able to get there?' asked the man.

'I have two hours to spare,' said the giant, 'and I will carry you into the neighbourhood of the castle; I must then return to look after the child who is in our care.'

The giant, thereupon, carried the man to within about a hundred leagues of the castle, where he left him, saying, 'You will be able to walk the remainder of the way yourself.'

The man journeyed on day and night till he reached the golden castle of Stromberg. He found it situated, however, on a glass mountain, and looking up from the foot he saw the enchanted maiden drive round her castle and then go inside. He was overjoyed to see her, and longed to get to the top of the mountain, but the sides were so slippery that every time he attempted to climb he fell back again. When he saw that it was impossible to reach her, he was greatly grieved, and said to himself, 'I will remain here and wait for her.' So he built himself a little hut, and there he sat and watched for a whole year, and every day he saw the king's daughter driving round her castle, but still was unable to get nearer to her.

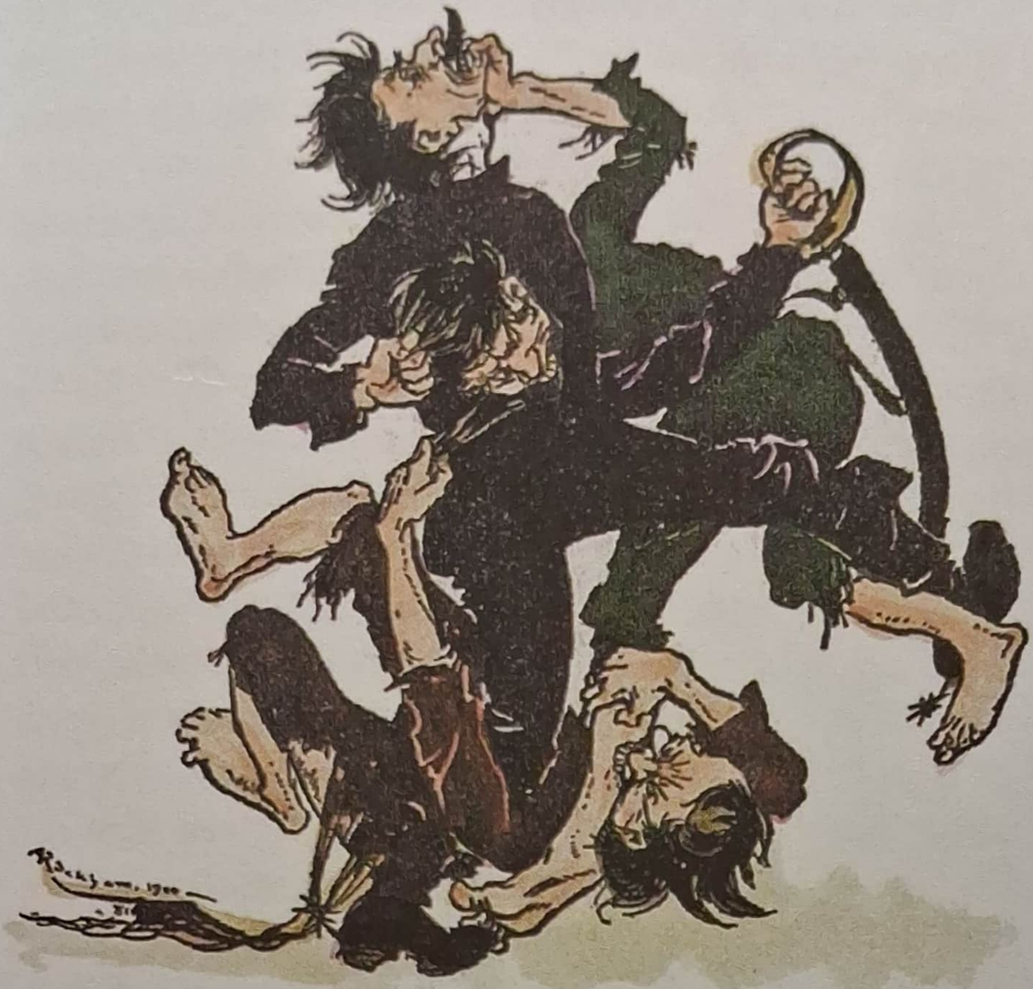
Looking out from his hut one day he saw three robbers fighting and he called out to them, 'God be with you.'

They stopped when they heard the call, but looking round and seeing nobody, they went on again with their fighting, which now became more furious.

'God be with you,' he cried again, and again they paused and looked about, but seeing no one went back to their fighting.

A third time he called out, 'God be with you,' and then, thinking he should like to know the cause of the dispute between the three men, he went out and asked them why they were fighting so angrily with one another.

One of them said that he had found a stick, and that he had but to strike it against any door through



which he wished to pass, and it immediately flew open; another told him that he had found a cloak which rendered its wearer invisible; and the third had caught a horse which would carry its rider over any obstacle, even up the glass mountain. They had been unable to decide whether they would keep together and have the things in common, or whether they would separate.

On hearing this, the man said, 'I will give you something in exchange for those three things; not money, for that I have not got, but something that is of far more value. I must first, however, prove whether all you have told me about your three things is true.'

The robbers, therefore, made him get on the horse, and handed him the stick and the cloak, and when he had put this round him he was no longer visible.

Then he fell upon them with the stick and beat them one after another, crying, 'There, you idle vagabonds, you have got what you deserve; are you satisfied now!'

After this he rode up the glass mountain. When he reached the gate of the castle, he found it closed, but he gave it a blow with his stick, and it flew wide open at once and he passed through. He mounted the steps and entered the room where the maiden was sitting, with a golden goblet full of wine in front of her. She could not see him for he still wore his cloak. He took the ring which she had given him off his finger, and threw it into the goblet, so that it rang as it touched the bottom.

'That is my own ring,' she exclaimed, 'and if that is so the man must also be here who is coming to set me free.' She sought for him about the castle, but could find him nowhere.

Meanwhile he had gone outside again and mounted his horse and thrown off the cloak. When therefore she came to the castle gate she saw him, and cried aloud for joy.

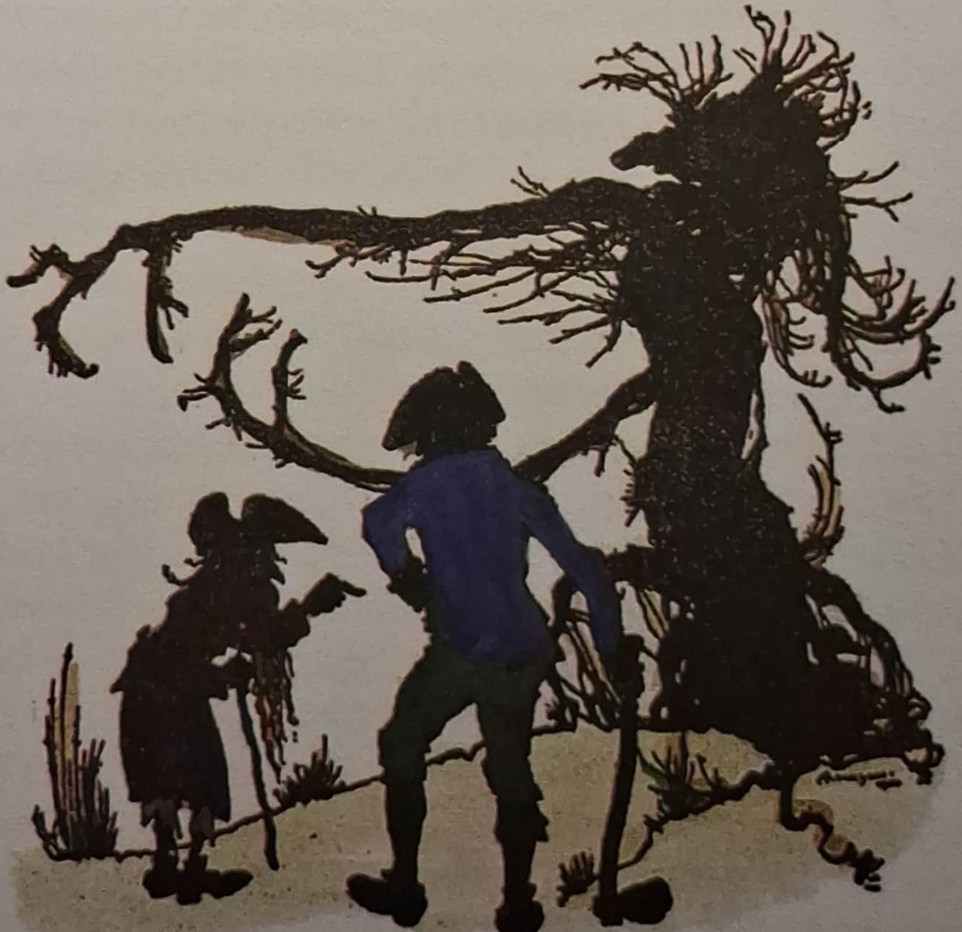
Then he dismounted and took her in his arms; and she kissed him, and said, 'Now you have indeed set me free, and tomorrow we will celebrate our marriage.'

The Golden Goose

There was a man who had three sons, the youngest of whom was called Simpleton and was despised, mocked and sneered at on every occasion.

It happened that the eldest wanted to go into the forest to hew wood, and before he went his mother gave him a beautiful sweet cake and a bottle of wine in order that he might not suffer from hunger or thirst.

When he entered the forest he met a little grey-haired old man who bade him good day, and said: 'Do give me a piece of cake out of your pocket, and let me have a draught of your wine; I am so hungry and thirsty.'



But the clever son answered: 'If I give you my cake and wine, I shall have none for myself; be off with you,' and he left the little man standing and went on.

But when he began to hew down a tree, it was not long before he made a false stroke, and the axe cut him in the arm, so that he had to go home and have it bound up. And this was the little grey man's doing.

After this the second son went into the forest, and his mother gave him, like the eldest, a cake and a bottle of wine.

The little old grey man met him likewise, and asked him for a piece of cake and a drink of wine. But the second son, too, said sensibly enough: 'What I give you will be taken away from myself; be off!' and he left the little man standing and went on.

His punishment, however, was not delayed; when he had made a few blows at the tree he struck himself in the leg, so that he had to be carried home.

Then Simpleton said: 'Father, do let me go and cut wood.'

The father answered: 'Your brothers have hurt themselves with it; leave it alone, you do not understand anything about it.'

But Simpleton begged so long that at last he said: 'Just go then, you will get wiser by hurting yourself.' His mother gave him a cake made with water and baked in the cinders, and with it a bottle of sour beer.

When he came to the forest the little old grey man met him likewise, and greeting him, said: 'Give me a piece of your cake and a drink out of your bottle; I am so hungry and thirsty.'

Simpleton answered: 'I have only cinder-cake and sour beer; if that pleases you, we will sit down and eat.'

So they sat down, and when Simpleton pulled out his cinder-cake, it was a fine sweet cake, and the sour beer had become good wine.

So they ate and drank, and after that the little man said: 'Since you have a good heart, and are willing to divide what you have, I will give you good luck. There stands an old tree; cut it down, and you will find something at the roots.' Then the little man took leave of him.

Simpleton went and cut down the tree, and when it fell there was a goose sitting in the roots with feathers of pure gold. He lifted her up, and taking her with him, went to an inn where he thought he would stay the night.

Now the host had three daughters, who saw the goose and were curious to know what such a wonderful bird might be, and would have liked to have one of its golden feathers.

The eldest thought: 'I shall soon find an opportunity of pulling out a feather,' and as soon as Simpleton had gone out she seized the goose by the wing, but her hand remained sticking fast to it.

The second came soon afterwards, thinking only of how she might get a feather for herself, but she had scarcely touched her sister than she was held fast.

At last the third also came with the like intent, and the others screamed out: 'Keep away; for goodness' sake, keep away!'

But she did not understand why she was to keep away. 'The others are there,' she thought, 'I may as well be there too,' and ran to them; but as soon as she had touched her sister, she remained sticking fast to her. So they had to spend the night with the goose.

The next morning Simpleton took the goose under his arm and set out, without troubling himself about the three girls who were hanging on to it. They were obliged to run after him continually, now left, now right, wherever his legs took him.

In the middle of the fields the parson met them, and when he saw the procession he said: 'For shame, you good-for-nothing girls, why are you running across the fields after this young man? Is that seemly?'

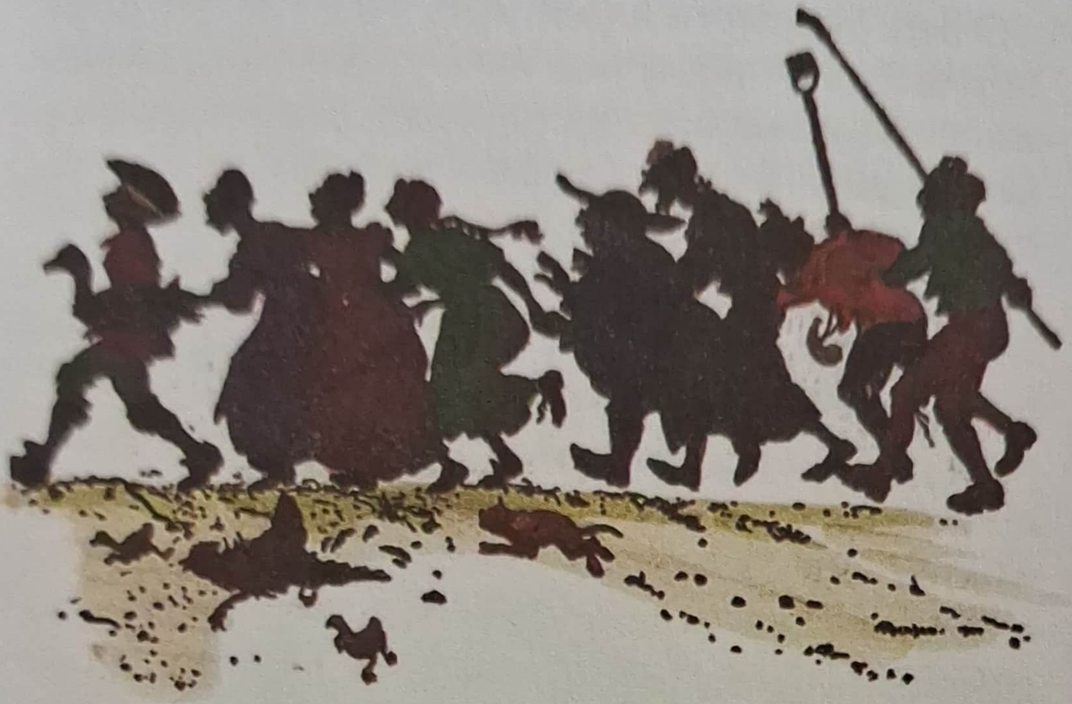
At the same time he seized the youngest by the hand in order to pull her away, but as soon as he touched her he likewise stuck fast, and was himself obliged to run behind.

Before long the sexton came by and saw his master, the parson, running behind three girls. He was astonished at this and called out: 'Hi! Your reverence, whither away so quickly? Do not forget that we have a christening today!' and running after him he took him by the sleeve, but was also held fast to it.

While the five were trotting thus, one behind the other, two labourers came with their hoes from the fields; the parson called out to them and begged that they would set him and the sexton free. But they had scarcely touched the sexton when they were held fast, and now there were seven of them running behind Simpleton and the goose.

Soon afterwards he came to a city, where a king ruled who had a daughter who was so serious that no one could make her laugh. So her father had put forth a decree that whosoever should be able to make her laugh should marry her.

When Simpleton heard this, he went with his goose and all her train before the king's daughter, and as soon as she saw the seven people running



on and on, one behind the other, she began to laugh quite loudly and as if she would never stop. Thereupon Simpleton asked to have her for his wife; but the king did not want him for a son-in-law, and made all manner of excuses and said he must first produce a man who could drink a cellarful of wine.

Simpleton thought of the little grey man, who could certainly help him; so he went into the forest, and in the same place where he had felled the tree, he saw a man sitting, who had a very sorrowful face.

Simpleton asked him what he was taking to heart so sorely, and he answered: 'I have such a great thirst and cannot quench it; cold water I cannot stand, a barrel of wine I have just emptied, but that to me is like a drop on a hot stone!'

'There I can help you,' said Simpleton, 'just come with me and you shall be satisfied.'

He led him into the king's cellar, and the man bent over the huge barrels and drank till his loins hurt, and before the day was out he had emptied all the barrels.

Then Simpleton asked once more for his bride, but the king was vexed that such an ugly fellow, whom everyone called Simpleton, should take away his daughter, and he made a new condition; he must first find a man who could eat a whole mountain of bread.

Simpleton did not think long, but went straight into the forest, where in the same place there sat a man who was tying up his body with a strap, and making an awful face, and saying: 'I have eaten a whole ovenful of rolls, but what good is that when one has such a hunger as I? My stomach remains empty, and I must tie myself up if I am not to die of hunger.'

At this Simpleton was glad, and said: 'Get up and come with me; you shall eat yourself full.'

He led him to the king's palace where all the flour in the whole kingdom was collected, and from it he caused a huge mountain of bread to be baked.

The man from the forest stood before it, began to eat, and by the end of one day the whole mountain had vanished.

Then Simpleton for the third time asked for his bride; but the king again sought a way out, and ordered him to find a ship which could sail on land and on water.

'As soon as you come sailing back in it,' said he, 'you shall have my daughter for wife.'

Simpleton went straight into the forest, and there sat the little grey man to whom he had given his cake.

When he heard what Simpleton wanted, he said: 'Since you have given me to eat and to drink, I will give you the ship; and I do all this because you once were kind to me.'

Then he gave him the ship which could sail on land and water, and when the king saw that, he could no longer prevent him from having his daughter.

The wedding was celebrated, and after the king's death, Simpleton inherited his kingdom and lived for a long time contentedly with his wife.

The Water of Life

Long before you or I were born, there reigned, in a country a great way off, a king who had three sons. This king one day fell very ill – so ill that nobody thought he could live.

His sons were very much grieved at their father's sickness; and as they were walking together very mournfully in the garden of the palace, a little old man met them and asked what was the matter.

They told him that their father was very ill, and that they were afraid nothing could save him.

'I know what would,' said the little old man; 'it is the Water of Life. If he could have a draught of it he would be well again; but it is very hard to get.'

Then the eldest son said, 'I will soon find it,' and he went to the sick king and begged that he might go in search of the Water of Life, as it was the only thing that could save him.

'No,' said the king. 'I had rather die than place you in such great danger as you must meet with in your journey.'

But he begged so hard that the king let him go; and the prince thought to himself, 'If I bring my father this water, he will make me sole heir to his kingdom.'

Then he set out: and when he had gone on his way some time he came to a deep valley, overhung with rocks and woods; and as he looked around, he saw standing above him on one of the rocks a little ugly dwarf, with a sugarloaf cap and a scarlet cloak; and the dwarf called to him and said, 'Prince, whither so fast?'

'What is that to thee, you ugly imp?' said the prince haughtily, and rode on.

But the dwarf was enraged at his behaviour, and laid a fairy spell of ill-luck upon him; so that as he rode on the mountain pass became narrower and narrower, and at last the way was so straitened that he could not go a step farther; and when he thought to have turned his horse round to go back the way he had come, he heard a loud laugh ringing round him, and found that the path was closed behind him, so that he was shut in all round.

He next tried to get off his horse and make his way on foot, but again the laugh rang in his ears, and he found himself unable to move a step, and thus he was forced to abide spellbound.

Meantime, the old king was lingering on in daily hope of his son's return, till at last the second son said, 'Father, I will go in search of the Water of Life.'

For he thought to himself, 'My brother is surely dead, and the kingdom will fall to me if I find the water.'

The king was at first very unwilling to let him go, but at last yielded to his wish. So he set out and followed the same road which his brother had done, and met with the same elf, who stopped him at the same spot in the mountains, saying, as before, 'Prince, prince, whither so fast?'

'Mind your own affairs, busybody!' said the prince scornfully, and rode on.

But the dwarf put the same spell upon him as he put on his elder brother, and he, too, was at last obliged to take up his abode in the heart of the mountains.

Thus it is with proud silly people, who think themselves above everyone else, and are too proud to ask or take advice.

When the second prince had thus been gone a long time, the youngest son said he would go and search for the Water of Life, and trusted he should soon be able to make his father well again.

So he set out, and the dwarf met him too at the same spot in the valley, among the mountains, and said, 'Prince, whither so fast?'

And the prince said, 'I am going in search of the Water of Life, because my father is ill, and like to die; can you help me? Pray be kind, and aid me if you can!'

'Do you know where it is to be found?' asked the dwarf.

'No,' said the prince, 'I do not. Pray tell me if you know.'

'Then as you have spoken to me kindly, and are wise enough to seek for advice, I will tell you how and where to go. The water you seek springs from a well in an enchanted castle; and, that you may be able to reach it in safety, I will give you an iron wand and two little loaves of bread; strike the iron door of the castle three times with the wand, and it will open; two hungry lions will be lying down inside gaping for their prey, but if you throw them the bread they will let you pass; then hasten on to the well, and take some of the Water of Life before the clock strikes twelve; for if you tarry longer the door will shut upon you for ever.'

Then the prince thanked his little friend with the scarlet cloak for his friendly aid, and took the wand and the bread, and went travelling on and on, over sea and over land, till he came to his journey's end, and found everything to be as the dwarf had told him. The door flew open at the third stroke of the wand, and when the lions were quieted he went on through the castle and came at length to a beautiful hall. Around it he saw several knights sitting in a trance; then he pulled off their rings and put them on his own fingers. In another room he saw on a table a sword and a loaf of bread, which he also took.

Farther on he came to a room where a beautiful young lady sat upon a couch; and she welcomed him joyfully, and said if he would set her free from the spell that bound her, the kingdom should be his, if he would come back in a year and marry her.

Then she told him that the well that held the Water of Life was in the palace gardens; and bade him make haste, and draw what he wanted before the clock struck twelve.

He walked on; and as he walked through beautiful gardens he came to a delightful shady spot in which stood a couch; and he thought to himself, as he felt tired, that he would rest himself for a while and gaze on the lovely scenes around him.

So he laid himself down, and sleep fell upon him unawares, so that he did not wake up till the clock was striking a quarter to twelve.

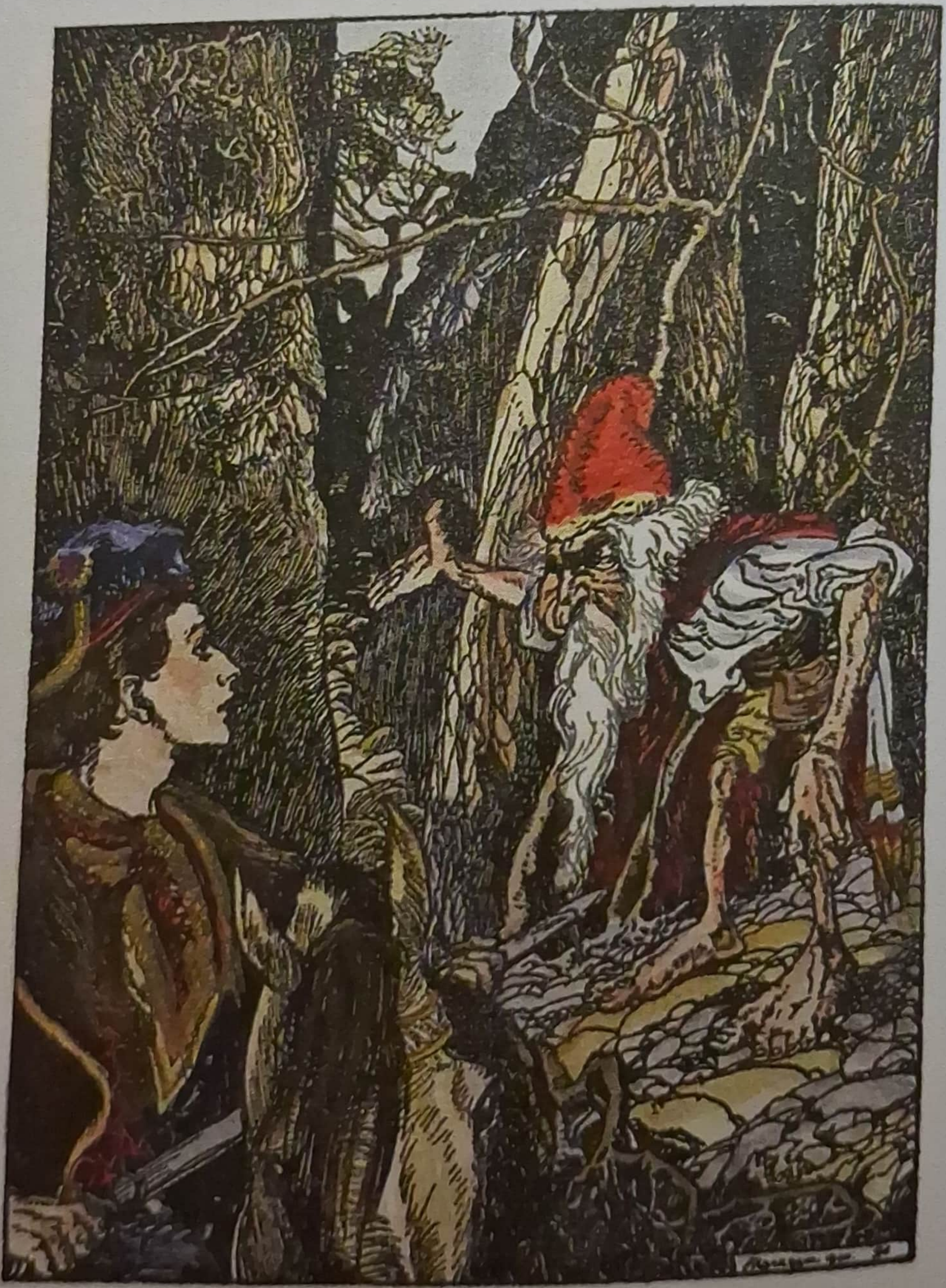
Then he sprang from the couch dreadfully frightened, ran to the well, filled a cup that was standing by him full of water, and hastened to get away in time.

Just as he was going out of the iron door it struck twelve, and the door fell so quickly upon him that it snapped off a piece of his heel.

When he found himself safe, he was overjoyed to think that he had got the Water of Life; and as he was going on his way homewards, he passed by the little dwarf, who, when he saw the sword and the loaf, said, ‘You have made a noble prize; with the sword you can at a blow slay whole armies, and the bread will never fail you.'

Then the prince thought to himself, 'I cannot go home to my father without my brothers' – so he said, 'My dear friend, can you tell me where my two brothers are, who set out in search of the Water of Life before me and never came back?'

'I have shut them up by a charm between two



mountains,' said the dwarf, 'because they were proud and ill-behaved, and scorned to ask advice.'

The prince begged so hard for his brothers that the dwarf at last set them free, though unwillingly, saying, 'Beware of them, for they have bad hearts.'

Their brother, however, was greatly rejoiced to see them, and told them all that had happened to him; how he had found the Water of Life, and had taken a cup full of it; and how he had set a beautiful princess free from a spell that bound her; and how she had engaged to wait a whole year, and then to marry him, and to give him the kingdom.

Then they all three rode on together, and on their way home came to a country that was laid waste by war and a dreadful famine, so that it was feared all must die for want. But the prince gave the king of the land the bread, and all his kingdom ate of it. And he lent the king the wonderful sword, and he slew the enemy's army with it; and thus the kingdom was once more in peace and plenty. In the same manner he befriended two other countries through which they passed on their way.

When they came to the sea, they got into a ship and during their voyage the two eldest said to themselves, 'Our brother has got the water which we could not find, therefore our father will forsake us and give him the kingdom, which is our right;' so they were full of envy and revenge, and agreed together how they could ruin him.

Then they waited till he was fast asleep, and poured the Water of Life out of the cup, and took it for themselves, giving him bitter sea-water instead.

When they came to their journey's end, the youngest son brought his cup to the sick king, that he might drink and be healed.

Scarcely, however, had he tasted the bitter sea-water than he became worse even than he was before; and then both the elder sons came in, and blamed the youngest for what they had done; and said that he wanted to poison their father, but that they had found the Water of Life, and had brought it with them. He no sooner began to drink of what they brought him, than he felt his sickness leave him, and was as strong and well as in his younger days.

Then they went to their brother, and laughed at him, and said, 'Well, brother, you found the Water of Life, did you? You have had the trouble and we shall have the reward. Pray, with all your cleverness, why did not you manage to keep your eyes open?

Next year one of us will take away your beautiful princess, if you do not take care. You had better say nothing about this to our father, for he does not believe a word you say; and if you tell tales, you shall lose your life into the bargain; but be quiet, and we will let you off.'

The old king was still very angry with his youngest son, and thought that he really meant to have taken away his life; so he called his court together, and asked what should be done, and all agreed that he ought to be put to death.

The prince knew nothing of what was going on, till one day, when the king's chief huntsmen went a-hunting with him, and they were alone in the wood together, the huntsman looked so sorrowful that the prince said, 'My friend, what is the matter with you?'

'I cannot and dare not tell you,' said he.

But the prince begged very hard, and said, 'Only tell me what it is, and do not think I shall be angry, for I will forgive you.'

'Alas!' said the huntsman; 'the king has ordered me to shoot you.'

The prince started at this, and said, 'Let me live, and I will change dresses with you; you shall take my royal coat to show to my father, and do you give me your shabby one.'

'With all my heart,' said the huntsman; 'I am sure I shall be glad to save you, for I could not have shot you.'

Then he took the prince's coat, and gave him the shabby one, and went away through the wood.

Some time after, three grand embassies came to the old king's court, with rich gifts of gold and precious stones for his youngest son; now all these were sent from the three kings to whom he had lent his sword and loaf of bread, in order to rid them of their enemy and feed their people.

This touched the old king's heart, and he thought his son might still be guiltless, and said to his court, 'Oh that my son were still alive! How it grieves me that I had him killed!'

'He is still alive,' said the huntsman; 'and I am glad that I had pity on him, but let him go in peace, and brought home his royal coat.'

At this the king was overwhelmed with joy, and made it known throughout all his kingdom that if his son would come back to his court he would forgive him.

Meanwhile the princess was eagerly waiting till her deliverer should come back; and had a road made leading up to her palace all of shining gold; and told her courtiers that whoever came on horseback, and rode straight up to the gate upon it, was her true lover, and they must let him in; but whoever rode on one side of it, they must be sure was not the right one, and they must send him away at once.

The time soon came when the eldest brother thought that he would make haste to go to the princess and say that he was the one who had set her free, and that he should have her for his wife, and the kingdom with her.

As he came before the palace and saw the golden road, he stopped to look at it, and he thought to himself, 'It is a pity to ride upon this beautiful road;' so he turned aside and rode on the right-hand side of it. But when he came to the gate, the guards, who had seen the road he took, said to him that he could not be who he said he was, and must go about his business.

The second prince set out soon afterwards on the same errand; and when he came to the golden road, and his horse had set one foot upon it, he stopped to look at it, and thought it very beautiful, and said to himself, 'What a pity it is that anything should tread here!' Then he too turned aside and rode on the left side of it. But when he came to the gate the guards said he was not the true prince, and that he too must go away about his business; and away he went.

Now when the full year was come round, the third brother left the forest in which he had lain hid for fear of his father's anger, and set out in search of his betrothed bride.

So he journeyed on, thinking of her all the way, and rode so quickly that he did not even see what the road was made of, but went with his horse straight over it; and as he came to the gate it flew open, and the princess welcomed him with joy, and said he was her deliverer, and he should now be her husband and lord of the kingdom. When the first joy at their meeting was over, the princess told him she had heard of his father having forgiven him, and of his wish to have him home again; so, before his wedding with the princess, he went to visit his father, taking her with him.

Then he told him everything – how his brothers had cheated and robbed him, and yet that he had borne all those wrongs for the love of his father. And the old king was very angry, and wanted to punish his wicked sons; but they made their escape, and got into a ship and sailed away over the wide sea, and where they went to nobody knew and nobody cared.

And now the old king gathered together his court, and asked all his kingdom to come and celebrate the wedding of his son and the princess. And young and old, noble and squire, gentle and simple, came at once on the summons; and among the rest came the friendly dwarf, with the sugarloaf hat, and a new scarlet cloak.

And the wedding was held, and the merry bells rung, and all the good people they danced and they sang, and feasted and frolick'd I can't tell how long.

The Twelve Huntsmen

There was once a king's son who had a bride whom he loved very much. And when he was sitting beside her and very happy, news came that his father lay sick unto death, and desired to see him once again before his end.

Then he said to his beloved: 'I must now go and leave you. I give you a ring as a remembrance of me. When I am king, I will return and fetch you.'

So he rode away, and when he reached his father, the latter was dangerously ill, and near his death. He said to him: 'Dear son, I wished to see you once again before my end to have your promise you will marry as I wish,' and he named a certain king's daughter who was to be his wife.

The son was in such distress that he did not think what he was doing, and said: 'Yes, dear father, your will shall be done,' and thereupon the king shut his eyes, and died.

When therefore the son had been proclaimed king, and the time of mourning was over, he was forced to keep the promise which he had given his father, and caused the king's daughter to be asked in marriage, and she was promised to him. His first betrothed heard of this, and fretted so much about his faithfulness that she nearly died.

Then her father said to her: 'Dearest child, why are you so sad? You shall have whatsoever you will.'

She thought for a moment and said: 'Dear father, I wish for eleven girls exactly like myself in face, figure and size.'

The father said: 'If it be possible, your desire shall be fulfilled,' and he caused a search to be made in his whole kingdom, until eleven young maidens were found who exactly resembled his daughter in face, figure and size.

When they came to the king's daughter, she had twelve suits of huntsmen's clothes made, all alike, and the eleven maidens had to put on the huntsmen's clothes, and she herself put on the twelfth suit. Thereupon she took her leave of her father, and rode away with them, and rode to the court of her former betrothed, whom she loved so dearly.

Then she asked if he required any huntsmen, and if he would take all of them into his service. The king looked at her and did not know her, but as they were such handsome fellows, he said he would willingly take them, and so they became the king's twelve huntsmen.

The king, however, had a lion which was a wondrous animal, for he knew all concealed and secret things. It came to pass that one evening he said to the king: 'You think you have twelve huntsmen?'

'Yes,' said the king, 'they are twelve huntsmen.'

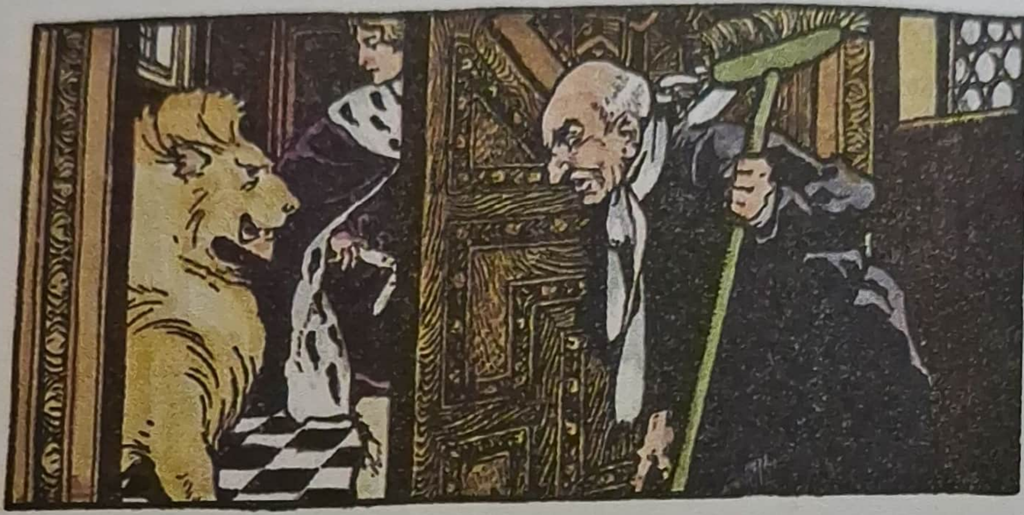
The lion continued: 'You are mistaken, they are twelve girls.'

The king said: 'That cannot be true! How will you prove that to me?'

'Oh, just let some peas be strewn in the antechamber,' answered the lion, 'and then you will soon see. Men have a firm step, and when they walk over peas none of them stir, but girls trip and skip and drag their feet and the peas roll about.'

The king was well pleased with the counsel, and caused the peas to be strewn.

There was, however, a servant of the king's who favoured the huntsmen, and when he heard that they were going to be put to this test he went to them and repeated everything, and said: 'The lion wants to make the king believe that you are girls.'



Then the king's daughter thanked him, and said to her maidens: 'Show some strength, and step firmly on the peas.'

So next morning when the king had the twelve huntsmen called before him, and they came into the ante-chamber where the peas were lying, they stepped so firmly on them, and had such a strong, sure walk, that not one of the peas either rolled or stirred.

Then they went away again, and the king said to the lion: 'You have lied to me, they walk just like men.'

The lion said: 'They had been informed that they were going to be put to the test, and they assumed some strength. Just let twelve spinning-wheels be brought into the ante-chamber, and they will go to them and be pleased with them, and that is what no man would do.'

The king liked the advice, and had the spinning-wheels placed in the ante-chamber.

But the servant, who was well disposed to the huntsmen, went to them, and disclosed the project.

So when they were alone the king's daughter said to her eleven girls: 'Show some constraint, and do not look round at the spinning-wheels.'

And next morning when the king had his twelve huntsmen summoned, they went through the ante-chamber, and never once looked at the spinning-wheels.

Then the king again said to the lion: 'You have deceived me, they are men, for they have not looked at the spinning-wheels.'

The lion replied: 'They have restrained themselves.' The king, however, would no longer believe him.

The twelve huntsmen always followed the king to the chase, and his liking for them continually increased.

Now it came to pass that one day, when they were out hunting, news came that the king's bride was approaching. When the true bride heard that, it hurt her so much that her heart was almost broken, and she fell fainting to the ground.

The king thought something had happened to his dear huntsman, ran up to him, wanted to help him, and drew his glove off. Then he saw the ring which he had given to his first bride, and when he looked in her face he recognised her. Then his heart was so touched that he kissed her, and when she opened her eyes he said: 'You are mine, and I am yours, and no one in the world can alter that.'

He sent a messenger to the other bride, and entreated her to return to her own kingdom, for he had a wife already, and someone who had just found an old key did not require a new one. Thereupon the wedding was celebrated, and the lion was again taken into favour, because, after all, he had told the truth.

The King of the Golden Mountain

There was once a merchant who had only one child, a son, who was very young and barely able to run alone. He had two richly laden ships then making a voyage upon the seas, in which he had embarked all his wealth, in the hope of making great gains, but news came that both were lost. Thus from being a rich man he became all at once so very poor that nothing was left to him but one small plot of land; and there he often went in an evening to take his walk, and ease his mind of a little of his trouble.

One day, as he was roaming along in a brown study, thinking with no great comfort on what he had been and what he now was and was likely to be, all of a sudden there stood before him a little, rough-looking, black dwarf. ‘Prithee, friend, why so sorrowful?’ said he to the merchant; ‘what is it you take so deeply to heart?’

‘If you would do me any good I would willingly tell you,’ said the merchant.

‘Who knows but I may?’ said the little man. ‘Tell me what ails you, and perhaps you will find I may be of some use.’

Then the merchant told him how all his wealth was gone to the bottom of the sea, and how he had nothing left but that little plot of land.

‘Oh, trouble not yourself about that,’ said the dwarf; ‘only undertake to bring me here, twelve years hence, whatever meets you first on your going home, and I will give you as much as you please.’

The merchant thought this was no great thing to ask; that it would most likely be his dog or his cat, or something of that sort, but forgot his little boy Heinel; so he agreed to the bargain, and signed and sealed the bond to do what was asked of him.

But as he drew near home, his little boy was so glad to see him that he crept behind him, and laid fast hold of his legs, and looked up in his face and laughed.

Then the father started, trembling with fear and horror, and saw what it was that he had bound himself to do; but as no gold was come, he made himself easy by thinking that it was only a joke that the dwarf was playing him, and that, at any rate, when the money came, he should see the bearer, and would not take it in.

About a month afterwards he went upstairs into a lumber-room to look for some old iron, that he might sell it and raise a little money; and there, instead of his iron, he saw a large pile of gold lying on the floor.

At the sight of this he was overjoyed, and forgetting all about his son, went into trade again, and became a richer merchant than before.

Meantime little Heinel grew up, and as the end of the twelve years drew near the merchant began to call to mind his bond, and became very sad and thoughtful; so that care and sorrow were written upon his face.

The boy one day asked what was the matter, but his father would not tell for some time; at last, however, he said that he had, without knowing it, sold him for gold to a little, ugly-looking, black dwarf, and that the twelve years were coming round when he must keep his word.

Then Heinel said, 'Father, give yourself very little trouble about that; I shall be too much for the little man.'

When the time came, the father and son went out together to the place agreed upon, and the son drew a circle on the ground and set himself and his father in the middle of it. The little black dwarf soon came, and walked round and round about the circle, but could not find any way to get into it, and he either could not or dared not jump over it.

At last the boy said to him. 'Have you anything to say to us, my friend? What do you want?' Now Heinel had found a friend in a good fairy, that was fond of him, and had told him what to do; for this fairy knew what good luck was in store for him.

'Have you brought me what you said you would?' said the dwarf to the merchant.

The old man held his tongue, but Heinel said again, 'What do you want here?'

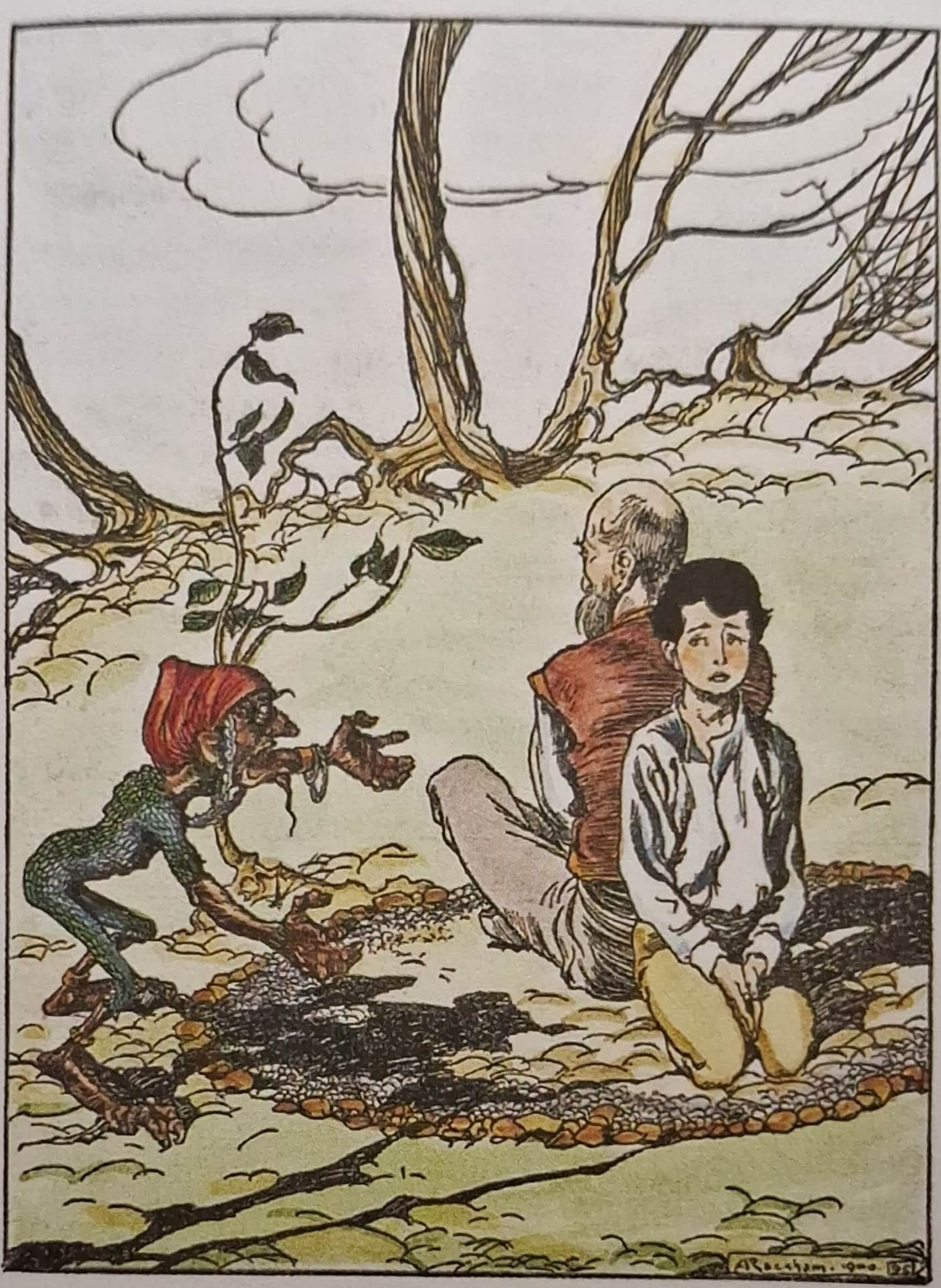
The dwarf said, 'I come to talk with your father, not with you.'

'You have cheated and taken in my father,' said the son; 'pray give him up his bond at once.'

'Fair and softly,' said the little old man; 'right is right; I have paid my money, and your father has had it, and spent it; so be so good as to let me have what I paid it for.'

'You must have my consent to that first,' said Heinel, 'so please to step in here, and let us talk it over.'

The old man grinned, and showed his teeth, as if he should have been very glad to get into the circle if he could. Then at last, after a long talk, they came to terms. Heinel agreed that his father must give him up, and that so far the dwarf should have his way; but, on the other hand, the fairy had told Heinel what fortune was in store for him if he followed his



own course; and he did not choose to be given up to his humpbacked friend, who seemed so anxious for his company.

So, to make a sort of drawn battle of the matter, it was settled that Heinel should be put into an open boat that lay on the seashore hard by; that the father should push him off with his own hand, and that he should thus be set adrift, and left to the bad or good luck of wind and weather. Then he took leave of his father, and set himself in the boat, but before it got far off a wave struck it, and it fell with one side low in the water, so the merchant thought that poor Heinel was lost, and went home very sorrowful, while the dwarf went his way, thinking that at any rate he had had his revenge.

The boat, however, did not sink, for the good fairy took care of her friend, and soon raised the boat up again, and it went safely on. The young man sat safe within, till at length it ran ashore upon an unknown land. As he jumped upon the shore he saw before him a beautiful castle, but empty and dreary within, for it was enchanted. 'Here,' said he to himself, 'must I find the prize the good fairy told me of.' So he searched the whole palace through, till at last he found a white snake, lying coiled up on a cushion in one of the chambers.

Now the white snake was an enchanted princess; and she was very glad to see him, and said, 'Are you at last come to set me free? Twelve long years have I waited here for the fairy to bring you hither as she promised, for you alone can save me. This night twelve men will come: their faces will be black, and they will be dressed in chain armour. They will ask what you do here, but give no answer; and let them do what they will – beat, whip, pinch, prick or torment you – bear all; only speak not a word, and at twelve o'clock they must go away. The second night twelve others will come; and the third night twenty-four, who will even cut off your head; but at the twelfth hour of that night their power will be gone, and I shall be free, and will come and bring you the Water of Life, and will wash you with it, and bring you back to life and health.' And all came to pass as she had said; Heinel bore all, and spoke not a word; and the third night the princess came, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Joy and gladness burst forth throughout the castle, the wedding was celebrated, and he was crowned King of the Golden Mountain.

They lived together very happily, and the queen had a son. And thus eight years had passed over their heads, when the king thought of his father; and he began to long to see him once again. But the queen was against his going, and said, 'I know well that misfortunes will come upon us if you go.' However, he gave her no rest till she agreed. At his going away she gave him a wishing-ring, and said, 'Take this ring, and put it on your finger; whatever you wish it will bring you; only promise never to make use of it to bring me hence to your father's house.' Then he said he would do what she asked, and put the ring on his finger, and wished himself near the town where his father lived.

Heinel found himself at the gates in a moment; but the guards would not let him go in, because he was so strangely clad. So he went up to a neighbouring hill, where a shepherd dwelt, and borrowed his old smock, and thus passed unknown into the town. When he came to his father's house, he said he was his son; but the merchant would not believe him, and said he had had but one son, his poor Heinel, who he knew was long since dead; and as he was only dressed like a poor shepherd, he would not even give him anything to eat. The king, however, still vowed that he was his son, and said, 'Is there no mark by which you would know that I am really your son?'

'Yes,' said his mother, 'our Heinel had a mark like a raspberry on his right arm.' Then he showed them the mark, and they knew that what he had said was true.

He next told them how he was King of the Golden Mountain, and was married to a princess, and had a son seven years old.

But the merchant said, 'That can never be true; he must be a fine king truly who travels about in a shepherd's smock!'

At this the son was vexed; and forgetting his word, turned his ring and wished for his queen and son. In an instant they stood before him; but the queen wept, and said he had broken his word, and bad luck would follow. He did all he could to soothe her, and she at last seemed to be appeased; but she was not so in truth, and was only thinking how she should punish him.

One day he took her to walk with him out of the town, and showed her the spot where the boat was set adrift upon the wide waters. Then he sat himself down, and said, 'I am very much tired; sit by me, I will rest my head in your lap, and sleep a while.' As soon as he had fallen asleep, however, she drew the ring from his finger, and crept softly away, and wished herself and her son at home in their kingdom. And when he awoke he found himself alone, and saw that the ring was gone from his finger. 'I can never go back to my father's house,' said he; 'they would say I am a sorcerer. I will journey forth into the world, till I come again to my kingdom.'

So saying he set out and travelled till he came to a hill where three giants were sharing their father's goods; and as they saw him pass they cried out and said, 'Little men have sharp wits; he shall part the goods between us.' Now there was a sword that cut off an enemy's head whenever the wearer gave the words, 'Heads off!'; a cloak that made the owner invisible, or gave him any form he pleased; and a pair of boots that carried the wearer wherever he wished. Heinel said they must first let him try these wonderful things, then he might know how to set a value upon them. Then they gave him the cloak, and he wished himself a fly, and in a moment he was a fly. 'The cloak is very well,' said he; 'now give me the sword.'

'No,' said they; 'not unless you undertake not to say, "Heads off!" for if you do we are all dead men.' So they gave it him, charging him to try it on a tree. He next asked for the boots also; and the moment he had all three in his power, he wished himself at the Golden Mountain; and there he was at once. So the giants were left behind with no goods to share or quarrel about.

As Heinel came near his castle he heard the sound of merry music; and the people around told him that his queen was about to marry another husband. Then he threw his cloak around him, and passed through the castle hall, and placed himself by the side of the queen, where no one saw him. But when anything to eat was put upon her plate, he took it away and ate it himself; and when a glass of wine was handed to her, he took it and drank it; and thus, though they kept on giving her meat and drink, her plate and cup were always empty.

Upon this, fear and remorse came over her, and she went into her chamber alone, and sat there weeping; and he followed her there. 'Alas!' said she to herself, 'was I not once set free? Why then does this enchantment still seem to bind me?'

'False and fickle one!' said he. 'One indeed came who set thee free, and he is now near thee again; but how have you used him? Ought he to have had such treatment from thee?'

Then he went out and sent away the company, and said the wedding was at an end now that he had come back to his kingdom. But the princes, peers and great men mocked at him. However, he would enter into no parley with them, but only asked them if they would go in peace or not. Then they turned upon him and tried to seize him; but he drew his sword. 'Heads off!' cried he; and with the word the traitors' heads fell before him, and Heinel was once more King of the Golden Mountain.

The Seven Ravens

There was once a man who had seven sons, and last of all one daughter. Although the little girl was very pretty, she was so weak and small that they thought she could not live and they said she should at once be christened.

So the father sent one of his sons in haste to the spring to get some water, but the other six ran with him. Each wanted to be first at drawing the water, and so they were in such a hurry that all let their pitchers fall into the well, and they stood very foolishly looking at one another, and did not know what to do, for none dared go home.

In the meantime the father was uneasy, and could not tell what made the young men stay so long. 'Surely,' said he, 'the whole seven must have forgotten themselves over some game of play' – and when he had waited still longer and they yet did not come, he flew into a rage and wished them all turned into ravens.

Scarcely had he spoken these words when he heard a croaking over his head, and looked up and saw seven ravens as black as coal flying round and round. Sorry as he was to see his wish so fulfilled, he did not know how what was done could be undone, and comforted himself as well as he could for the loss of his seven sons with his dear little daughter, who soon became stronger and every day more beautiful.

For a long time she did not know that she had ever had any brothers, for her father and mother took care not to speak of them before her; but one day by chance she heard the people about her speak of them.

'Yes,' said they, 'she is beautiful indeed, but still 'tis a pity that her brothers should have been lost for her sake.'

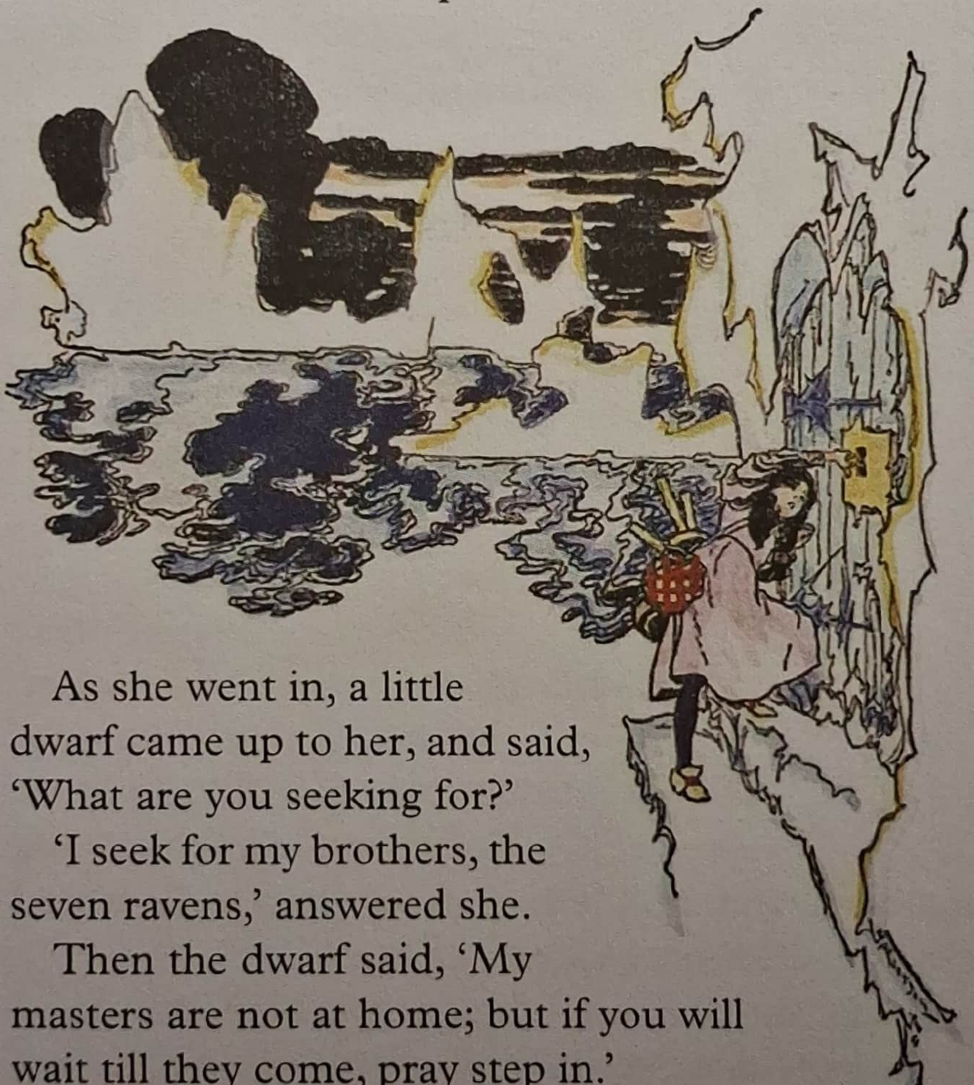
Then she was much grieved, and went to her father and mother, and asked if she had had any brothers, and what had become of them. So they dared no longer hide the truth from her, but said it was the will of heaven, and that her birth was only the innocent cause of it; but the little girl mourned sadly about it every day, and thought herself bound to do all she could to bring her brothers back; and she had neither rest nor ease, till at length one day she stole away, and set out into the wide world to find her brothers, wherever they might be, and free them, whatever it might cost her.

She took nothing with her but a little ring which her father and mother had given her, a loaf of bread in case she should be hungry, a little pitcher of water in case she should be thirsty, and a little stool to rest upon when she should be weary.

Thus she went on and on, and journeyed till she came to the world's end; then she came to the sun, but the sun looked much too hot and fiery; so she ran away quickly to the moon, but the moon was cold and chilly, and said, 'I smell flesh and blood this way!' So she took herself away in a hurry and came to the stars, and the stars were friendly and kind to her, and each star sat upon his own little stool; but the morning star rose up and gave her a little piece of wood, and said, 'If you have not this little piece of wood, you cannot unlock the castle that stands on the glass mountain; it is there your brothers live.'

The little girl took the piece of wood, rolled it up in a little cloth, and went on again until she came to the glass mountain, and found the door to the castle shut. Then she felt for the little piece of wood; but when she unwrapped the cloth it was not there, and she saw she had lost the gift of the good stars.

What was to be done? She wanted to save her brothers but had no key to the castle of the glass mountain; so this faithful little sister took a knife out of her pocket and cut off her little finger, that was just the size of the piece of wood she had lost, and put it in the door and opened it.

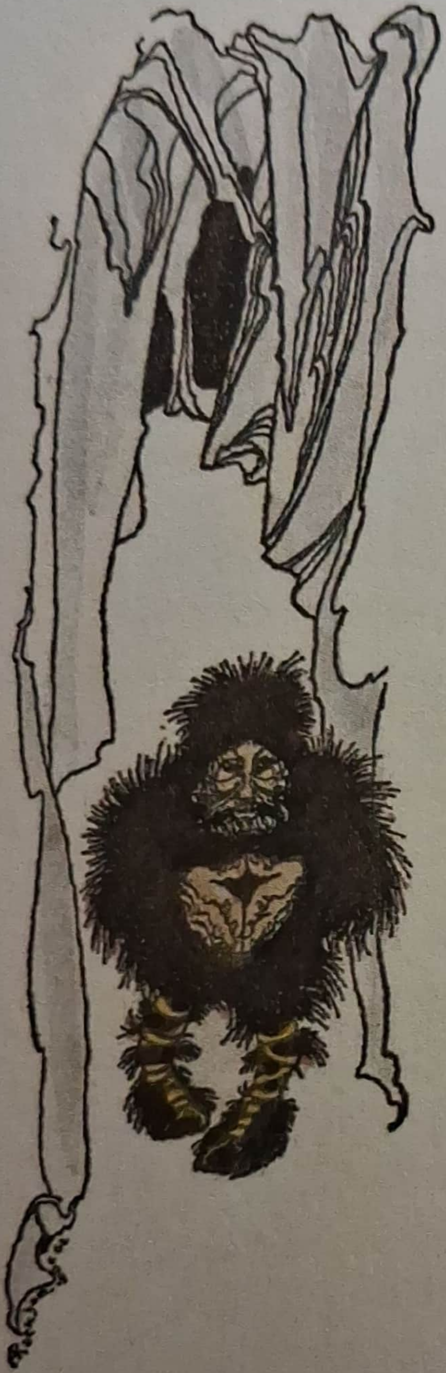


As she went in, a little dwarf came up to her, and said, 'What are you seeking for?'

'I seek for my brothers, the seven ravens,' answered she.

Then the dwarf said, 'My masters are not at home; but if you will wait till they come, pray step in.'

Now the little dwarf was getting their dinner ready, and he brought their food upon seven little plates, and their drink in seven little glasses, and set them upon the table, and out of each little plate their



sister ate a small piece, and out of each little glass she drank a small drop; but she let the ring that she had brought with her fall into the last glass.

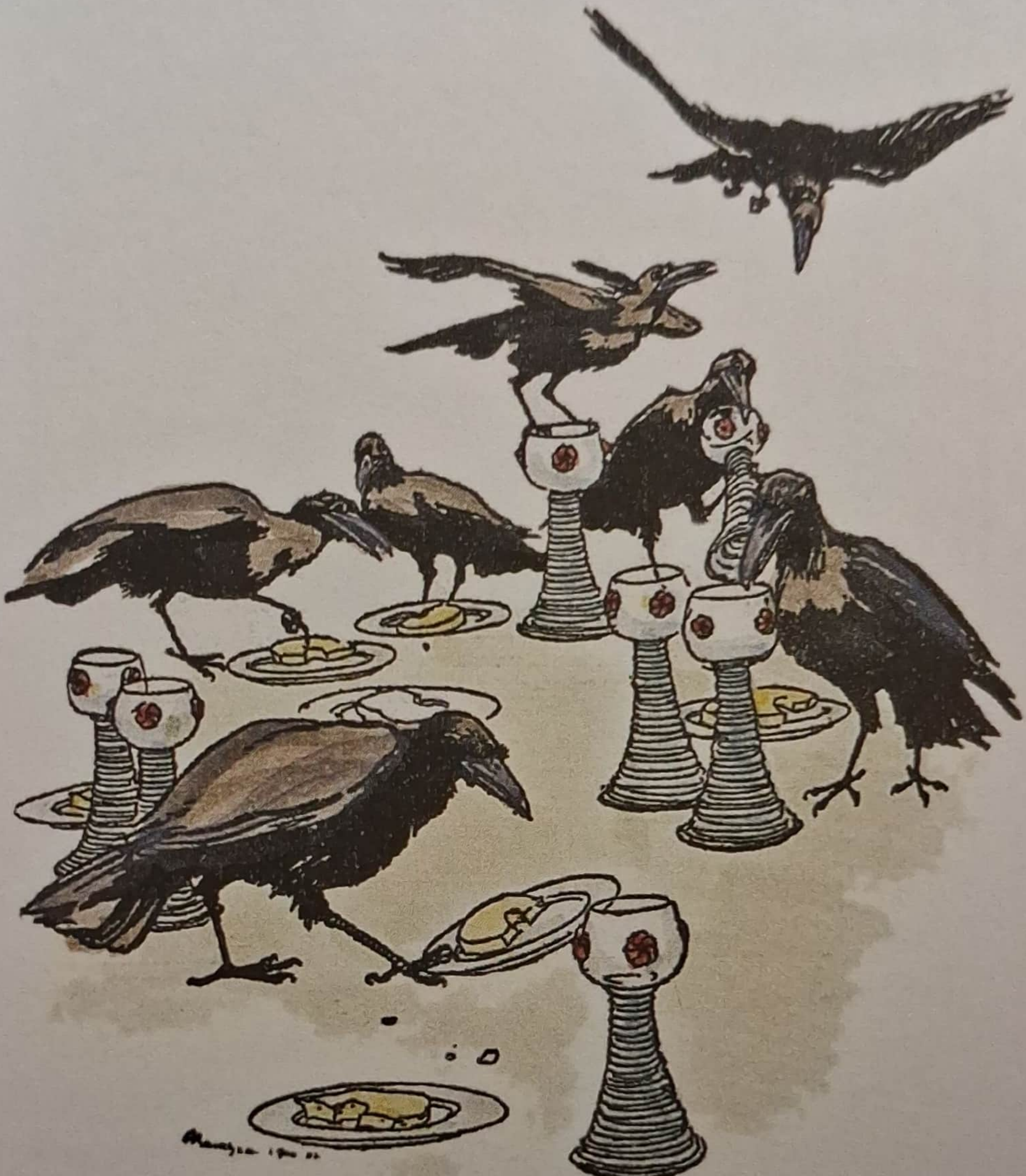
All of a sudden she heard a fluttering and croaking in the air, and the dwarf said, 'Here come my masters.'

When they came in, they wanted to eat and drink, and looked for their little plates and glasses.

Then said one after the other, 'Who has eaten from my little plate? And who has been drinking out of my little glass? Caw! Caw! Well I ween mortal lips have this way been.'

When the seventh came to the bottom of his glass, and found there the ring, he looked at it, and knew that it was his father's and mother's, and said, 'Oh that our little sister would but come! Then we should be free.'

When the little girl heard this (for she stood behind the door all the time and listened), she ran forward, and in an instant all the ravens took their right form again; and all hugged and kissed each other, and went merrily home.



Dr Know-All

There was once upon a time a poor peasant called Crabb, who drove with two oxen a load of wood to the town, and sold it to a doctor for two thalers. When the money was being counted out to him, it so happened that the doctor was sitting at table, and when the peasant saw how well he ate and drank, his heart desired what he saw, and he would willingly have been a doctor too. So he remained standing a while, and at length enquired if he too could be a doctor.

'Oh, yes,' said the doctor, 'that is soon managed.'

'What must I do?' asked the peasant.

'In the first place buy yourself an ABC book of the kind which has a cock on the frontispiece; in the second, turn your cart and your two oxen into money, and get yourself some clothes, and whatsoever else pertains to medicine; thirdly, have a sign painted for yourself with the words: 'I am Dr Know-All', and have that nailed up above your house-door.'

The peasant did everything that he had been told to do. When he had doctored people awhile, but not long, a rich and great lord had some money stolen. Then he was told about Dr Know-All, who lived in such and such a village, and must know what had become of the money.

So the lord had the horses harnessed to his carriage, drove out to the village, and asked Crabb if he were Dr Know-All.

Yes, he was, he said.

Then he was to go with him and bring back the stolen money.

'Oh, yes, but Grete, my wife, must go too.'

The lord was willing, and let both of them have a seat in the carriage, and they all drove away together. When they came to the nobleman's castle, the table was spread, and Crabb was told to sit down and eat.

'Yes, but my wife, Grete, too,' said he, and he seated himself with her at the table.

And when the first servant came with a dish of delicate fare, the peasant nudged his wife, and said: 'Grete, that was the first,' meaning that was the servant who brought the first dish.

The servant, however, thought he intended by that to say: 'That is the first thief,' and as he actually was so, he was terrified, and said to his comrade outside: 'The doctor knows all, we shall fare ill; he said I was the first.'

The second did not want to go in at all, but was forced. So when he went in with his dish, the peasant nudged his wife, and said: 'Grete, that is the second.' This servant was equally alarmed, and he got out as fast as he could.

The third fared no better, for the peasant again said: 'Grete, that is the third.'

The fourth had to carry in a dish that was covered, and the lord told the doctor that he was to show his skill, and guess what was beneath the cover. Actually, there were crabs. The doctor looked at the dish, had no idea what to say, and cried: 'Ah, poor Crabb.'

When the lord heard that, he cried: 'There! He knows it; he must also know who has the money!'

On this the servants looked terribly uneasy, and made a sign to the doctor that they wished him to step outside for a moment. When therefore he went out, all four of them confessed to him that they had stolen the money, and said that they would willingly restore it, and give him a heavy sum into the bargain, if he would not denounce them, for if he did they would be hanged.

They led him to the spot where the money was concealed. With this the doctor was satisfied, and returned to the hall, sat down to the table, and said: 'My lord, now will I search in my book where the gold is hidden.'

The fifth servant, however, crept into the stove to hear if the doctor knew still more. But the doctor sat still, opened his ABC book and turned the pages backwards and forwards looking for the cock. As he could not find it immediately, he said: 'I know you are there, so you had better come out!'

Then the fellow in the stove thought that the doctor meant him, and full of terror, sprang out, crying: 'That man knows everything!

Then Dr Know-All showed the lord where the money was, but did not say who had stolen it, and received from both sides much money in reward, and became a renowned man.

The Wedding of Mrs Fox

FIRST STORY

There was once upon a time an old fox with nine tails, who believed that his wife was not faithful to him, and wished to put her to the test. He stretched himself out under the bench, did not move a limb, and behaved as if he were stone dead. Mrs Fox went up to her room, shut herself in, and her maid, Miss Cat, sat by the fire and did the cooking.

When it became known that the old fox was dead, suitors presented themselves. The maid heard someone standing at the house-door, knocking. She went and opened it, and it was a young fox, who said: 'What may you be about, Miss Cat? Do you sleep or do you wake?'

She answered:

'I am not sleeping, I am waking;
Would you know what I am making?
I am boiling warm beer with butter,
Will you be my guest for supper?'

'No, thank you, miss,' said the fox, 'what is Mrs Fox doing?'

The maid replied:

'She is sitting in her room,
Moaning in her gloom,
Weeping her little eyes quite red,
Because old Mr Fox is dead.'

'Do just tell her, miss, that a young fox is here, who would like to woo her.'

'Certainly, young sir.'

The cat goes up the stairs trip, trap. The door she knocks at tap, tap, tap. 'Mistress Fox, are you inside?'

'Oh, yes, my little cat,' she cried.

'A wooer he stands at the door out there.'

'What does he look like, my dear? Has he nine as beautiful tails as the late Mr Fox?'

'Oh, no,' answered the cat, 'he has only one.'

'Then I will not have him.'

Miss Cat went downstairs and sent the wooer away.

Soon afterwards there was another knock, and another fox was at the door who wished to woo Mrs Fox. He had two tails, but he did not fare better than the first. After this still more came, each with one tail more than the last, but they were all turned away, until at last one came who had nine tails, like old Mr Fox.

When the widow heard that, she said joyfully to the cat:

'Now open the gates and doors all wide,
And carry old Mr Fox outside.'

But just as the wedding was going to be solemnised, old Mr Fox roused up, and cudgelled all the rabble, and drove them and Mrs Fox out of the house.

SECOND STORY

When old Mr Fox was dead, the wolf came as a suitor, and knocked at the door, and the cat who was servant to Mrs Fox, opened it to him.

The wolf greeted her, and said:

'Good-day, Miss Cat of sprightly wit,
How comes it that alone you sit?
What are you making good?'

The cat replied:

'In milk I'm breaking bread so sweet,
Will you be my guest, and eat?'

'No, thank you, Miss Cat,' answered the wolf. 'Is Mrs Fox not at home?'

The cat said:

'She sits upstairs in her room,
Bewailing her sorrowful doom,
Bewailing her trouble so sore,
For old Mr Fox is no more.'

The wolf answered:

'If she's in want of a husband now,
Then will it please her to step below?'

The cat runs quickly up the stair, and lets her tail fly here and there, until she comes to the parlour door. With her five gold rings at the door she knocks:

'Are you within, good Mistress Fox?
If you're in want of a husband now,
Then will it please you to step below?

Mrs Fox asked: 'Has the gentleman red stockings on, and has he a pointed mouth?'

'No,' answered the cat.

'Then he won't do for me.'

When the wolf was gone, came a dog, a stag, a hare, a bear, a lion, and all the beasts of the forest, one after the other. But one of the good qualities which old Mr Fox had possessed was always lacking, and the cat had continually to send the suitors away.

At length came a young fox. Then Mrs Fox said:

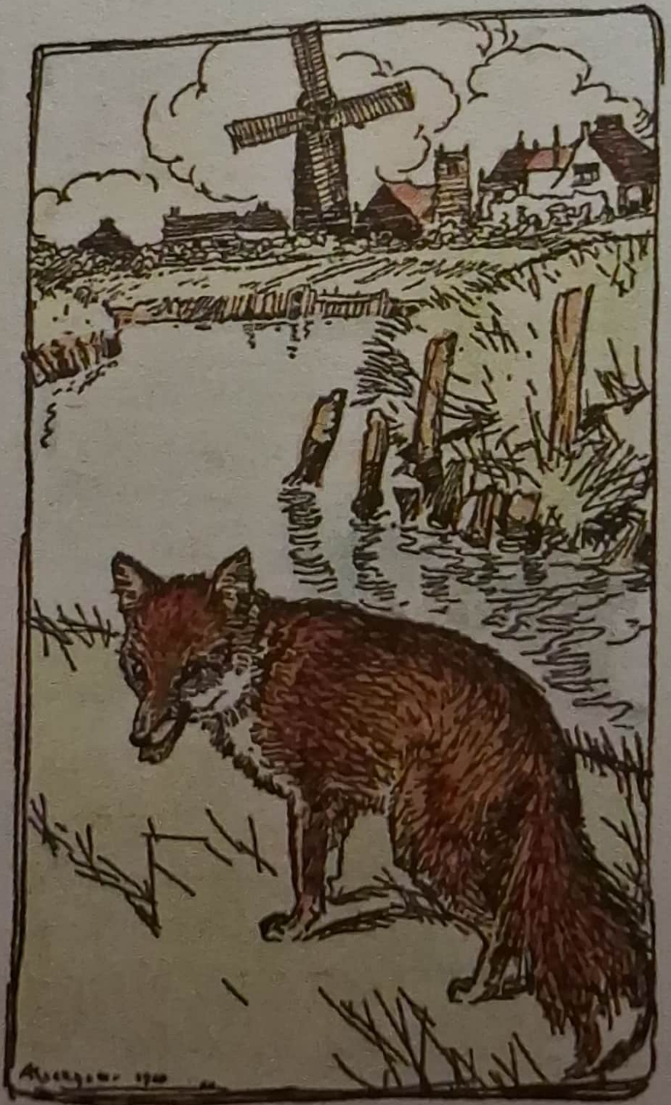
'Has the gentleman red stockings on, and has he a little pointed mouth?'

'Yes,' said the cat, 'he has.'

'Then let him come upstairs,' said Mrs Fox, and she ordered the servant to prepare the wedding feast.

'Sweep me the room as clean as you can,
Up with the window, fling out my old man!
For many a fine fat mouse he brought,
Yet of his wife he never thought,
But ate up every one he caught.'

Then the wedding was solemnised with young Mr Fox, and there was much rejoicing and dancing; and if they have not left off, they are dancing still.



The Salad

As a merry young huntsman was once going briskly along through a wood, there came up a little old woman, and said to him, ‘Good-day, good-day; you seem merry enough, but I am hungry and thirsty; do pray give me something to eat.’

The huntsman took pity on her, and put his hand in his pocket and gave her what he had.

Then he wanted to go his way; but she took hold of him, and said, ‘Listen, my friend, to what I am going to tell you; I will reward you for your kindness; go your way, and after a little time you will come to a tree where you will see nine birds sitting on a cloak. Shoot into the midst of them, and one will fall down dead; the cloak will fall too; take it, it is a wishing-cloak, and when you wear it you will find yourself at any place where you may wish to be. Cut open the dead bird, take out its heart and keep it, and you will find a piece of gold under your pillow every morning when you rise. It is the bird’s heart that will bring you this good luck.’

The huntsman thanked her, and thought to himself, ‘If all this does happen, it will be a fine thing for me.’ When he had gone a hundred steps or so, he heard a screaming and chirping in the branches over him, and looked up and saw a flock of birds pulling a cloak with their bills and feet and screaming, fighting and tugging at each other as if each wished to have it himself. ‘Well,’ said the huntsman, ‘this is wonderful; this happens just as the old woman said,’ and he shot into the midst of them so that their feathers flew all about. Off went the flock chattering away; but one fell down dead, and the cloak fell with it. Then the huntsman did as the old woman had told him – cut open the bird, took out the heart, and carried the cloak home with him.

The next morning when he awoke he lifted up his pillow – and there lay the piece of gold glittering underneath; the same happened the next day, and indeed every day when he arose. He heaped up a great deal of gold, and at last thought to himself, 'Of what use is this gold to me while I am at home? I will go out into the world and look about me.'

Then he took leave of his friends, and hung his bag and bow about his neck, and went his way. It so happened that his road one day led through a thick wood, at the end of which was a large castle in a green meadow, and at one of the windows stood an old woman with a very beautiful young lady by her side and they were looking about them.

Now the old woman was a witch, and said to the young lady, 'There is a young man coming out of the wood who carries a wonderful prize; we must get it away from him, my dear child, for it is more fit for us than for him. He has a bird's heart that brings a piece of gold under his pillow every morning.'

Meantime the huntsman came nearer and looked at the lady, and said to himself, 'I have been travelling so long that I should like to go into this castle and rest myself, for I have money enough to pay for anything I want;' but the real reason was, that he wanted to see more of the beautiful lady. Then he went into the house, and was welcomed kindly; and it was not long before he was so much in love that he thought of nothing else but looking into the lady's eyes, and doing everything that she wished.

Then the old woman said, 'Now is the time for getting the bird's heart.'

So the lady stole it away, and he never found any more gold under his pillow, for it lay now under the young lady's, and the old woman took it away every morning; but he was so much in love that he never missed his prize.

'Well,' said the old witch, 'we have got the bird's heart, but not the wishing-cloak yet, and that we must also get.'

'Let us leave him that,' said the young lady; 'he has already lost his wealth.'

Then the witch was very angry, and said, 'Such a cloak is a very rare and wonderful thing, and I must and will have it.'

So she did as the old woman told her, and sat herself at the window, and looked about the country and seemed very sorrowful; then the huntsman said, 'What makes you so sad?'

'Alas! dear sir,' said she, 'yonder lies the granite rock where all the costly diamonds grow, and I want so much to go there that whenever I think of it I cannot help being sorrowful, for who can reach it? Only the birds and the flies – man cannot.'

'If that's all your grief,' said the huntsman, 'I'll take you there with all my heart.' So he drew her under his cloak, and the moment he wished to be on the granite mountain they were both there. The priceless diamonds glittered so on all sides that they were delighted with the sight and picked up the finest.

But the old witch made a deep sleep come upon him, and he said to the young lady, 'Let us sit down and rest ourselves a little, I am so tired that I cannot stand any longer.'

So they sat down, and he laid his head in her lap and fell asleep; and while he was sleeping, she took the cloak from his shoulders, hung it on her own, picked up the diamonds and wished herself home again.

When he awoke and found that his lady had tricked him, and left him alone on the wild rock, he said, 'Alas! what roguery there is in the world!' and there he sat in great grief and fear, not knowing what to do. Now this rock belonged to fierce giants who lived upon it; and as he saw three of them striding about, he thought to himself, 'I can only save myself by feigning to be asleep;' so he laid himself down as if he were in a sound sleep.

When the giants came up to him, the first pushed him with his foot, and said, 'What worm is this that lies here curled up?'

'Tread upon him and kill him,' said the second.

'It's not worth the trouble,' said the third; 'let him live, he'll go climbing higher up the mountain, and some cloud will come rolling and carry him away.' And they passed on. But the huntsman had heard all they said; and as soon as they were gone, he climbed to the top of the mountain, and when he had sat there a short time a cloud came rolling around him, and caught him in a whirlwind and bore him along for some time, till it settled in a garden, and he fell quite gently to the ground among the herbs and lettuces.

Then he looked around him, and said, 'I wish I had something to eat, if not I shall be worse off than before; and here I see neither apples nor pears, nor any kind of fruit – nothing but salad stuff.' At last he thought to himself, 'I can eat salad, it will refresh and strengthen me.' So he picked out a fine head of lettuce, but scarcely had he swallowed two bites than he felt himself quite changed, and saw with horror that he was turned into an ass. However, he still felt very hungry, and the salad tasted very nice; so he ate on till he came to another kind of salad, and scarcely had he tasted it when he felt another change come over him, and soon saw that he was lucky enough to have found his old shape again.

Then he laid himself down and slept off a little of his weariness; and when he awoke the next morning he broke off a head both of the good and the bad salad, and thought to himself, 'This will help me to my fortune again, and enable me to pay off some folks for their treachery.' So he went away to try and find the castle of his erstwhile friends; and after wandering about a few days he luckily found it. Then he stained his face all over brown, so that even his mother would not have known him, and went into the castle and asked for a lodging; 'I am so tired,' said he, 'that I can go no farther.'

'Countryman,' said the witch, 'who are you? And what is your business?'

'I am,' said he, 'a messenger sent by the king to find the finest salad that grows under the sun. I have been lucky enough to find it, and have brought it with me; but the heat of the sun scorches so that it begins to wither, and I don't know that I can carry it farther.'

When the witch and the young lady heard of his beautiful salad, they longed to taste it, and said, 'Dear countryman, let us just taste it.'

'To be sure,' answered he; 'I have two heads of it with me, and will give you one;' so he opened his bag and gave them the bad.

Then the witch herself took it into the kitchen to be dressed; and than it was ready she could not wait till it was carried up, but took a few leaves immediately and put them in her mouth, and scarcely were they swallowed than she lost her own form and ran braying down into the court in the form of an ass. Now the servant-maid came into the kitchen, and seeing the salad ready, was going to carry it up; but on the way she too felt a wish to taste it as the old woman had done, and ate some leaves; so she also was turned into an ass and ran after the other, letting the dish with the salad fall on the ground. The messenger sat all this time with the beautiful young lady, and as nobody came with the salad and she longed to taste it, she said, 'I don't know where the salad can be.'

Then he thought something must have happened, and said, 'I will go into the kitchen and see.' And as he went he saw two asses in the court running about, and the salad lying on the ground. 'All right!' said he; 'those two have had their share.'

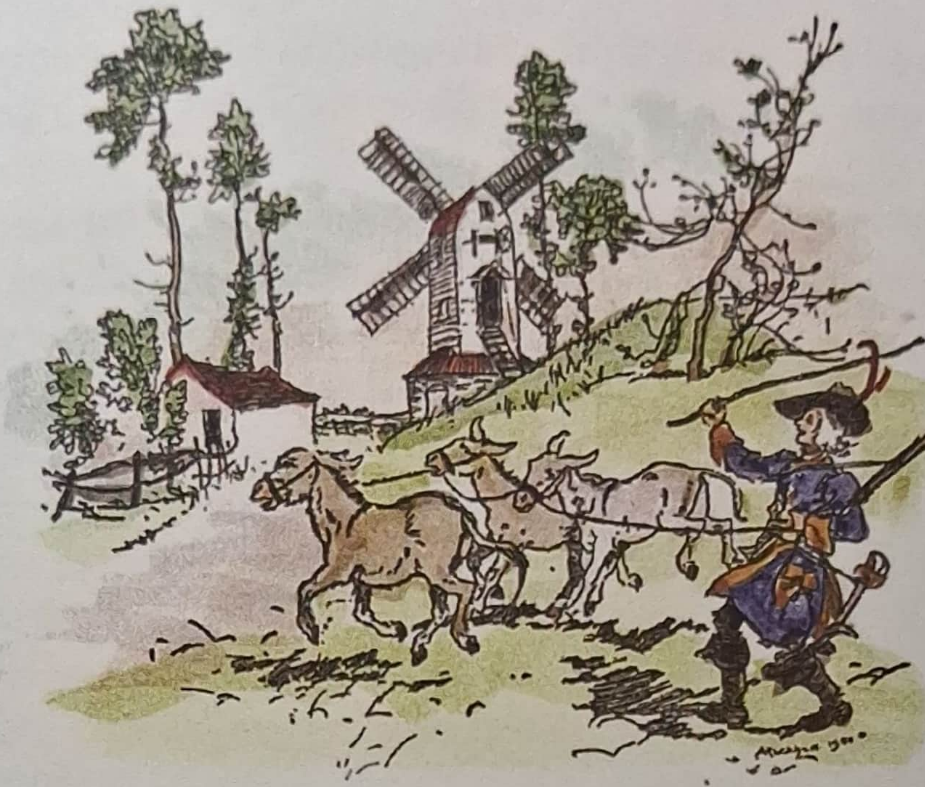
Then he picked up the rest of the leaves, laid them on the dish and brought them to the young lady, saying, 'I bring you the dish myself that you may not wait any longer.' So she ate of it, and like the others ran off into the court braying away.

Then the huntsman washed his face and went into the court that they might know him. 'Now you shall be paid for your roguery,' said he; and tied them all three to a rope and took them along with him till he came to a mill; he stopped and knocked at the window.

'What's the matter?' said the miller.

'I have three tiresome beasts here,' said the other; 'if you will take them, give them food and room, and treat them as I tell you, I will pay you whatever you ask.'

'With all my heart,' said the miller; 'but how shall I treat them?'



Then the huntsman said, 'Give the old one stripes three times a day and hay once; give the next [who was the servant-maid] stripes once a day and hay three times; and give the youngest [who was the beautiful lady] hay three times a day and no stripes' – for he could not find it in his heart to have her beaten.

After this he went back to the castle, where he found everything he wanted.

Some days after, the miller came to him and told him that the old ass was dead. 'The other two,' said he, 'are alive and eat, but are so sorrowful that they cannot last long.'

Then the huntsman pitied them, and told the miller to drive them back to him, and when they came, he gave them some of the good salad to eat.

And the beautiful young lady fell upon her knees before him, and said, 'O dearest huntsman! Forgive me all the ill I have done you; my mother forced me to it, it was against my will, for I always loved you very much. Your wishing-cloak hangs up in the closet, and as for the bird's heart, I will give it you too.'

But he said, 'Keep it; it will come to the same thing, for I mean to make you my wife.'

So they were married, and lived together very happily till they died.

The Youth Who Felt No Fear

A certain father had two sons: the elder was smart and sensible, and could do everything, but the younger was stupid and could neither learn nor understand anything; people said: 'There's a fellow who will give his father some trouble!' When anything had to be done, it was always the elder who was forced to do it; but if his father bade him fetch anything when it was late, or in the night-time, and the way led through the churchyard or any other dismal place, he answered: 'Oh no, father, I'll not go there, it makes me shudder!' for he was afraid. But when stories were told by the fire at night which made the flesh creep, and listeners would say: 'Oh, it makes us shudder!' the younger sat in a corner and listened with the rest of them, and could not imagine what they meant. 'They are always saying: "It makes me shudder, it makes me shudder!" It does not make me shudder,' thought he. 'That, too, must be an art of which I understand nothing!'

Now it came to pass that his father said to him one day: 'Hearken to me, you fellow in the corner there, you are growing tall and strong, and you too must learn something by which you can earn your bread. Look how your brother works, but you do not even earn your salt.'

'Well, father,' he replied, 'I am quite willing to learn something – indeed, if it could be managed, I should like to learn how to shudder. I don't understand that at all yet.'

The elder brother smiled when he heard that, and thought to himself: 'Goodness, what a blockhead that brother of mine is! He will never be good for anything as long as he lives! He who wants to be a sickle must bend himself betimes.'

The father sighed, and answered him: 'You shall soon learn what it is to shudder, but you will not earn your bread by that.'

Soon after this the sexton came to the house on a visit, and the father bewailed his trouble, and told him how his younger son was so backward in every respect that he knew nothing and learnt nothing. 'Just think,' said he, 'when I asked him how he was going to earn his bread, he actually wanted to learn to shudder.'

'If that be all,' replied the sexton, 'he can learn that with me. Send him to me, and I will soon polish him up.'

The father was glad to do it, for he thought: 'It will train the boy a little.'

The sexton therefore took him into his house with the intention of having him ring the church bell. After a day or two, the sexton awoke him at midnight and bade him arise and go up into the church tower and ring the bell. 'You shall soon learn what shuddering is,' thought he, and secretly went there before him; and when the boy was at the top of the tower and turned round, and was just going to take hold of the bell rope, he saw a white figure standing on the stairs opposite the sounding hole.

'Who is there?' cried he, but the figure made no reply, and did not move or stir. 'Give an answer,' cried the boy, 'or take yourself off; you have no business here at night.'

The sexton, however, remained standing motionless so that the boy might think he was a ghost.

The boy cried a second time: 'What do you want here? Speak if you are an honest fellow, or I will throw you down the steps!'

The sexton, not taking his threat seriously, uttered no sound and stood as if he were made of stone. Then the boy called to him for the third time, and as that was also to no purpose, he ran against him and pushed the ghost down the stairs, so that it fell down the ten steps and remained lying there in a corner. Thereupon he rang the bell, went home, and without saying a word went to bed and fell asleep.

The sexton's wife waited a long time for her husband, but he did not come back. At length she became uneasy, and wakened the boy, and asked: 'Do you know where my husband is? He climbed up the tower before you did.'

'No, I don't know,' replied the boy, 'but someone was standing by the sounding hole on the other side of the steps, and as he would neither gave an answer nor go away, I took him for a scoundrel, and threw him downstairs. Just go there and you will see if it was he. I should be sorry if it were.'

The woman ran away and found her husband, who was lying moaning in the corner, and had broken his leg.

She carried him down, and then with loud screams she hastened to the boy's father. 'Your boy,' cried she, 'has been the cause of a great misfortune! He has thrown my husband down the steps so that he broke his leg. Take the good-for-nothing fellow out of our house.'

The father was terrified, and ran thither and scolded the boy. 'What wicked tricks are these?' said he. 'The devil must have put them into your head.'

'Father,' he replied, 'do listen to me. I am quite innocent. He was standing there by night like one intent on doing evil. I did not know who it was, and I entreated him three times either to speak or to go away.'

'Ah,' said the father, 'I have nothing but unhappiness with you. Go out of my sight. I will see you no more.'

'Yes, father, right willingly, wait only until it is day. Then will I go forth and learn how to shudder, and then I shall, at any rate, understand one art which will support me.'

'Learn what you will,' replied the father, 'it is all the same to me. Here are fifty thalers for you. Take these and go into the wide world, and tell no one from whence you come, or who your father is, for I have reason to be ashamed of you.'

'Yes, father, it shall be as you will. If you desire nothing more than that, I can easily keep it in mind.'

When the day dawned, therefore, the boy put his fifty thalers into his pocket, and went forth on the great highway, and continually said to himself: 'If I could but shudder! If I could but shudder!' Then a man approached who heard this conversation which the youth was holding with himself, and when they had walked a little farther to where they could see the gallows, the man said to him: 'Look, there is the tree where seven men have married the ropemaker's daughter, and are now learning how to fly. Sit down beneath it, and wait till night comes, and you will soon learn how to shudder.'

'If that is all that is wanted,' answered the youth, 'it is easily done; and if I learn how to shudder as fast as that, you shall have my fifty thalers. Just come back to me early in the morning.' Then the youth went to the gallows, sat down beneath it, and waited till evening came. And as he was cold, he lighted himself a fire, but at midnight the wind blew so sharply that in spite of his fire, he could not get warm. And as the wind knocked the hanged men against each other, and they moved backwards and forwards, he thought to himself: 'If you shiver below by the fire, how those up above must freeze and suffer!' And as he felt pity for them, he raised the ladder, and climbed up, unbound one of them after the other, and brought down all seven. Then he stoked the fire, blew it, and set them all round it to warm themselves. But they sat there and did not stir, and the fire caught their clothes. So he said: 'Take care, or I will hang you up again.' The dead men, however, did not hear, but were quite silent, and let their rags go on burning. At this he grew angry, and said: 'If you will not take care, I cannot help you, I will not be burnt with you,' and he hung them up again each in his turn. Then he sat down by his fire and fell asleep, and the next morning the man came to him and wanted to have the fifty thalers, and said: 'Well, do you know how to shudder?'

'No,' answered he, 'how should I know? Those fellows up there did not open their mouths, and were so stupid that they let the few old rags which they had on their bodies get burnt.'

Then the man saw that he would not get the fifty thalers that day, and went away saying: 'Such a youth has never come my way before.'

The youth likewise went his way, and once more began to mutter to himself: 'Ah, if I could but shudder! Ah, if I could but shudder!'

A waggoner who was striding behind him heard this and asked: 'Who are you?'

'I don't know,' answered the youth.

Then the waggoner asked: 'From whence do you come?'

'I know not.'

'Who is your father?'

'That I may not tell you.'

'What is it that you are always muttering between your teeth?'

'Ah,' replied the youth, 'I do so wish I could shudder, but no one can teach me how.'

'Enough of your foolish chatter,' said the waggoner. 'Come with me, I will see about a place for you.'

The youth went with the waggoner, and in the evening they arrived at an inn where they wished to pass the night. Then at the entrance of the parlour the youth again said quite loudly: 'If I could but shudder! If I could but shudder!'

The host who heard this, laughed and said: 'If that is your desire, there ought to be a good opportunity for you here.'

'Ah, be silent,' said the hostess, 'so many prying persons have already lost their lives, it would be a pity and a shame if such beautiful eyes as these should never see the daylight again.'

But the youth said: 'However difficult it may be, I will learn it. For this purpose indeed have I journeyed forth.'

He let the host have no rest, until the latter told him that not far from thence stood a haunted castle where anyone could very easily learn what shuddering was if he would but watch in it for three nights. The king had promised that he who would venture to do so should have his daughter to wife, and she was the most beautiful maiden the sun shone on. Likewise in the castle lay great treasures, which were guarded by evil spirits, and these treasures would then be freed, and would make a poor man rich enough. Already many men had gone into the castle, but as yet none had come out again. Then the youth went next morning to the king, and said: 'If it be allowed, I will willingly watch three nights in the haunted castle.'

The king looked at him, and as the youth pleased him, he said: 'You may ask for three things to take into the castle with you, but they must be things without life.'

Then he answered: 'Then I ask for a fire, a turning lathe and a cutting-board with the knife.'

The king had these things carried into the castle for him during the day. When night was drawing near, the youth went up and made himself a bright fire in one of the rooms, placed the cutting-board and knife beside it and seated himself by the turning-lathe. 'Ah, if I could but shudder!' said he. 'I fear I shall not learn it here either.'

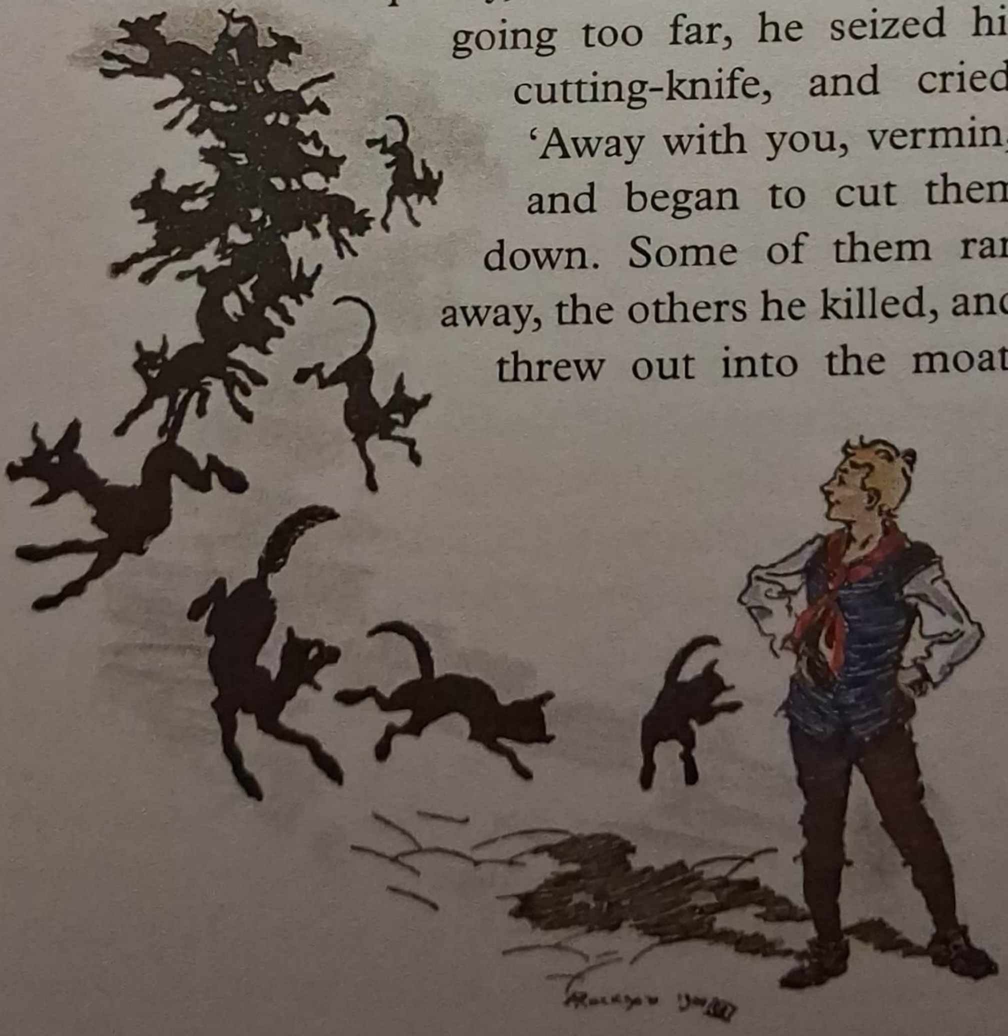
Towards midnight he was about to poke his fire when something cried suddenly from one corner: 'Au, miau! How cold we are!'

'You fools!' cried he, 'what are you crying about? If you are cold, come and take a seat by the fire and warm yourselves.'

And when he had said that, two great black cats came with one tremendous leap and sat down on each side of him, and looked savagely at him with their fiery eyes. After a short time, when they had warmed themselves, they said: 'Comrade, shall we have a game of cards?'

'Why not?' he replied, 'but just show me your paws.' Then they stretched out their claws. 'Oh,' said he, 'what long nails you have! Wait, I must first cut them for you.' Thereon he seized them by the throats, put them on the cutting-board and screwed their feet fast. 'I have looked at your fingers,' said he, 'and my fancy for card-playing has gone,' and he struck them dead and threw them out into the moat.

But when he had made away with these two, and was about to sit down again by his fire, out from every hole and corner came black cats and black dogs with red-hot chains, and more and more of them came until he could no longer move, and they yelled horribly, and got on his fire, pulled it to pieces, and tried to put it out. He watched them for a while quietly, but at last when they were going too far, he seized his cutting-knife, and cried: 'Away with you, vermin,' and began to cut them down. Some of them ran away, the others he killed, and threw out into the moat.



When he came back he fanned the embers of his fire again and warmed himself. And as he thus sat, his eyes would keep open no longer, and he felt a desire to sleep. Then he looked round and saw a great bed in the corner. 'That is the very thing for me,' said he, and got into it. When he was just going to shut his eyes, however, the bed began to move of its own accord, and went over the whole of the castle. 'That's right,' said he, 'but go faster.' Then the bed rolled on as if six horses were harnessed to it, up and down, over thresholds and stairs, but suddenly hop, hop, it turned upside down, and lay on him like a mountain. But he threw quilts and pillows up in the air, got out and said: 'Now anyone who likes, may drive,' and lay down by his fire, and slept till it was day.

In the morning the king came, and when he saw him lying there on the ground, he thought the evil spirits had killed him and he was dead. Then said he: 'After all it is a pity – for so handsome a man.'

The youth heard it, got up, and said: 'It has not come to that yet.'

Then the king was astonished, but very glad, and asked how he had fared. 'Very well indeed,' answered he; 'one night is past, the two others will pass likewise.'

Then he went to the innkeeper, who opened his eyes very wide, and said: 'I never expected to see you alive again! Have you learnt how to shudder yet?'

'No,' said he, 'it is all in vain. If someone would but tell me!'

The second night he again went up into the old castle, sat down by the fire, and once more began his old song: 'If I could but shudder!' When midnight came, an uproar and noise of tumbling about was heard; at first it was low, but it grew louder and louder. Then it was quiet for a while, and at length, with a loud scream, half a man came down the chimney and fell before him.

'Hallo!' cried he, 'another half belongs to this. This is not enough!' Then the uproar began again, there was a roaring and howling, and the other half fell down likewise. 'Wait,' said he, 'I will just stoke up the fire a little for you.' When he had done that and looked round again, the two pieces were joined together, and a hideous man was sitting in his place. 'That is no part of our bargain,' said the youth, 'the bench is mine.' The man wanted to push him away; the youth, however, would not allow that, but thrust him off with all his strength, and seated himself again in his own place. Then still more men fell down, one after the other; they brought nine dead men's legs and two skulls, and set them up and played at nine-pins with them. The youth also wanted to play and said: 'Listen you, can I join you?'

'Yes, if you have any money.'

'Money enough,' replied he, 'but your balls are not quite round.' Then he took the skulls and put them in the lathe and turned them till they were round. 'There, now they will roll better!' said he. 'Hurrah! Now we'll have fun!' He played with them and lost some of his money, but when it struck twelve, everything vanished from his sight. He lay down and quietly fell asleep.

Next morning the king came to enquire after him. 'How has it fared with you this time?' asked he.

'I have been playing at nine-pins,' he answered, 'and have lost a couple of farthings.'

'Have you not shuddered then?'

'What?' said he, 'I have had a wonderful time! If I did but know what it was to shudder!'

The third night he sat down again on his bench and said quite sadly: 'If I could but shudder.' When it grew late, six tall men came in and brought a coffin. Then he said: 'Ha, ha, that is certainly my little cousin, who died only a few days ago,' and he beckoned with his finger, and cried: 'Come, little cousin, come.' They placed the coffin on the ground, but he went to it and took the lid off, and a dead man lay therein. He felt his face, but it was cold as ice. 'Wait,' said he, 'I will warm you a little,' and went to the fire and warmed his hand and laid it on the dead man's face, but he remained cold. Then he took him out, and sat down by the fire and laid him on his breast and rubbed his arms that the blood might circulate again. As this also did no good, he thought to himself: 'When two people lie in bed together, they warm each other,' so he carried him to the bed, covered him over and lay down by him. After a short time the dead man became warm too, and began to move. Then said the youth, 'See, little cousin, have I not warmed you?'

The dead man, however, got up and cried: 'Now will I strangle you.'

'What!' said he, 'is that the way you thank me? You shall at once go into your coffin again,' and he took him up, threw him into it, and shut the lid. Then came the six men and carried him away again. 'I cannot manage to shudder,' said he. 'I shall never learn it here as long as I live.'

Then a man entered who was taller than all the others, and looked terrible. He was old, however, and had a long white beard. 'You wretch,' cried he, 'you shall soon learn what it is to shudder, for you shall die.'

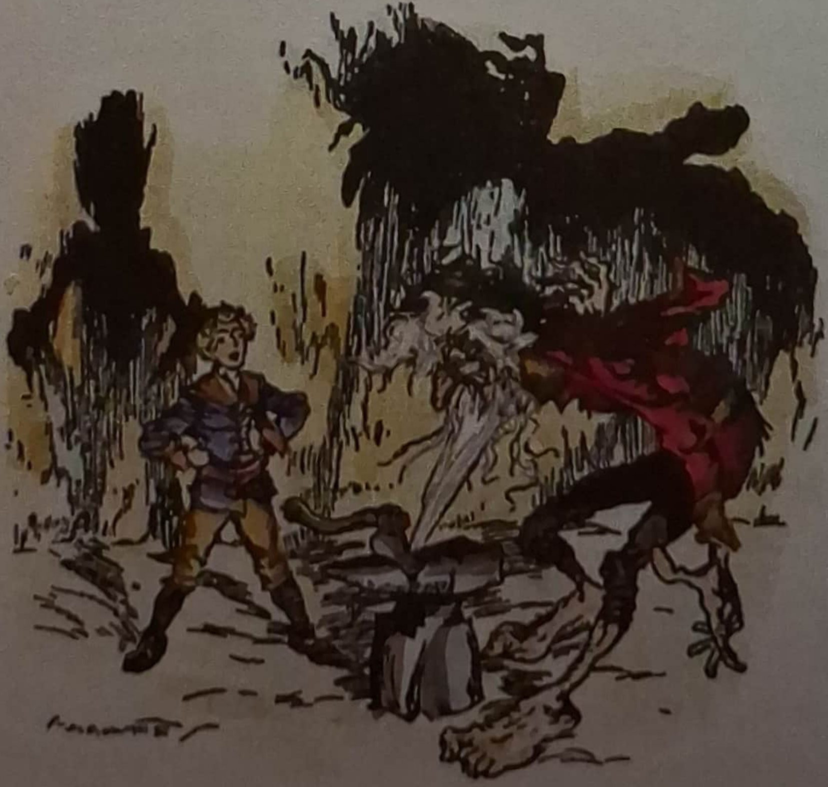
'Not so fast,' replied the youth. 'If I am to die, I shall have to have a say in it.'

'I will soon seize you,' said the fiend.

'Softly, softly, do not talk so big. I am as strong as you are, and perhaps even stronger.'

'We shall see,' said the old man. 'If you are stronger, I will let you go – come, we will try.' Then he led him by dark passages to a smith's forge, took an axe, and with one blow struck an anvil into the ground.

'I can do better than that,' said the youth, and went to the other anvil. The old man placed himself near and wanted to look on, and his white beard hung down. Then the youth seized the axe, split the anvil with one blow, and in it caught the old man's beard. 'Now I have you,' said the youth. 'Now it is your turn to die.' Then he seized an iron bar and beat the old man till he moaned and entreated him to stop, promising to give him great riches. The youth drew out the axe and let him go.



The old man led him back into the castle, and in a cellar showed him three chests full of gold. 'Of these,' said he, 'one part is for the poor, the other for the king, the third yours.'

In the meantime it struck twelve, and the spirit disappeared, so that the youth stood in darkness. 'I shall still be able to find my way out,' said he, and felt about, found the way into the room, and slept there by his fire.

Next morning the king came and said: 'Now you must have learnt what shuddering is?'

'No,' he answered; 'what can it be? My dead cousin was here, and a bearded man came and showed me a great deal of money down below, but no one told me what it was to shudder.'

'Then,' said the king, 'you have saved the castle, and shall marry my daughter.'

'That is all very well,' said he, 'but still I do not know what it is to shudder!'

Then the gold was brought up and the wedding celebrated; but howsoever much the young king loved his wife, and however happy he was, he still said always: 'If I could but shudder – if I could but shudder.' And this at last angered her.

Her waiting-maid said: 'I will find a cure for him; he shall soon learn what it is to shudder.' She went out to the stream which flowed through the garden, and had a whole bucketful of gudgeons brought to her. At night when the young king was sleeping, his wife drew the clothes off him and emptied the bucket full of cold water with the gudgeons in it over him, so that the little fishes sprawled about him. Then he woke up and cried: 'Oh, what makes me shudder so? What makes me shudder so, dear wife? Ah! now I know what it is to shudder!'

King Grisly Beard

A great king of a land far away in the east had a daughter who was very beautiful, but so proud, and haughty, and conceited, that none of the princes who came to ask her in marriage was good enough for her, and she only made sport of them.

Once upon a time the king held a great feast, and asked thither all her suitors; and they all sat in a row, ranged according to their rank – kings, and princes, and dukes, and earls, and counts, and barons, and knights. Then the princess came in, and as she passed by them she had something spiteful to say to everyone. The first was too fat: 'He's as round as a tub,' said she. The next was too tall: 'What a maypole!' said she. The next was too short: 'What a dumpling!' said she. The fourth was too pale, and she called him 'Wallface'. The fifth was too red, so she called him 'Coxcomb'. The sixth was not straight enough, so she said he was like a green stick that had been laid to dry over a baker's oven. And thus she had some joke to crack about everyone; but she laughed more than all at a good king who was there. 'Look at him,' said she; 'his beard is like an old mop; he shall be called Grisly Beard.' So the king got the nickname of Grisly Beard.

But the old king was very angry when he saw how his daughter behaved, and how she ill-treated all his guests; and he vowed that, willing or unwilling, she should marry the first man, be he prince or beggar, that next came to the door.

Two days after there came by a travelling fiddler, who began to play under the window and beg alms;

and when the king heard him, he said, 'Let him come in.' So they brought in a dirty-looking fellow; and when he had sung before the king and the princess, he begged a boon. Then the king said, 'You have sung so well, that I will give you my daughter for your wife.' The princess begged and prayed; but the king said, 'I have sworn to give you to the first comer, and I will keep my word.' So words and tears were of no avail; the parson was sent for, and she was married to the fiddler. When this was over the king said, 'Now get ready to go – you must not stay here – you must travel on with your husband.'

Then the fiddler went his way, and took her with him, and they soon came to a great wood. 'Pray,' said she, 'whose is this wood?'

'It belongs to King Grisly Beard,' answered he; 'hadst thou taken him, all had been thine.'

'Ah! unlucky wretch that I am!' sighed she; 'would that I had married King Grisly Beard!'

Next they came to some fine meadows. 'Whose are these beautiful green meadows?' said she.

'They belong to King Grisly Beard, hadst thou taken him, they had all been thine.'

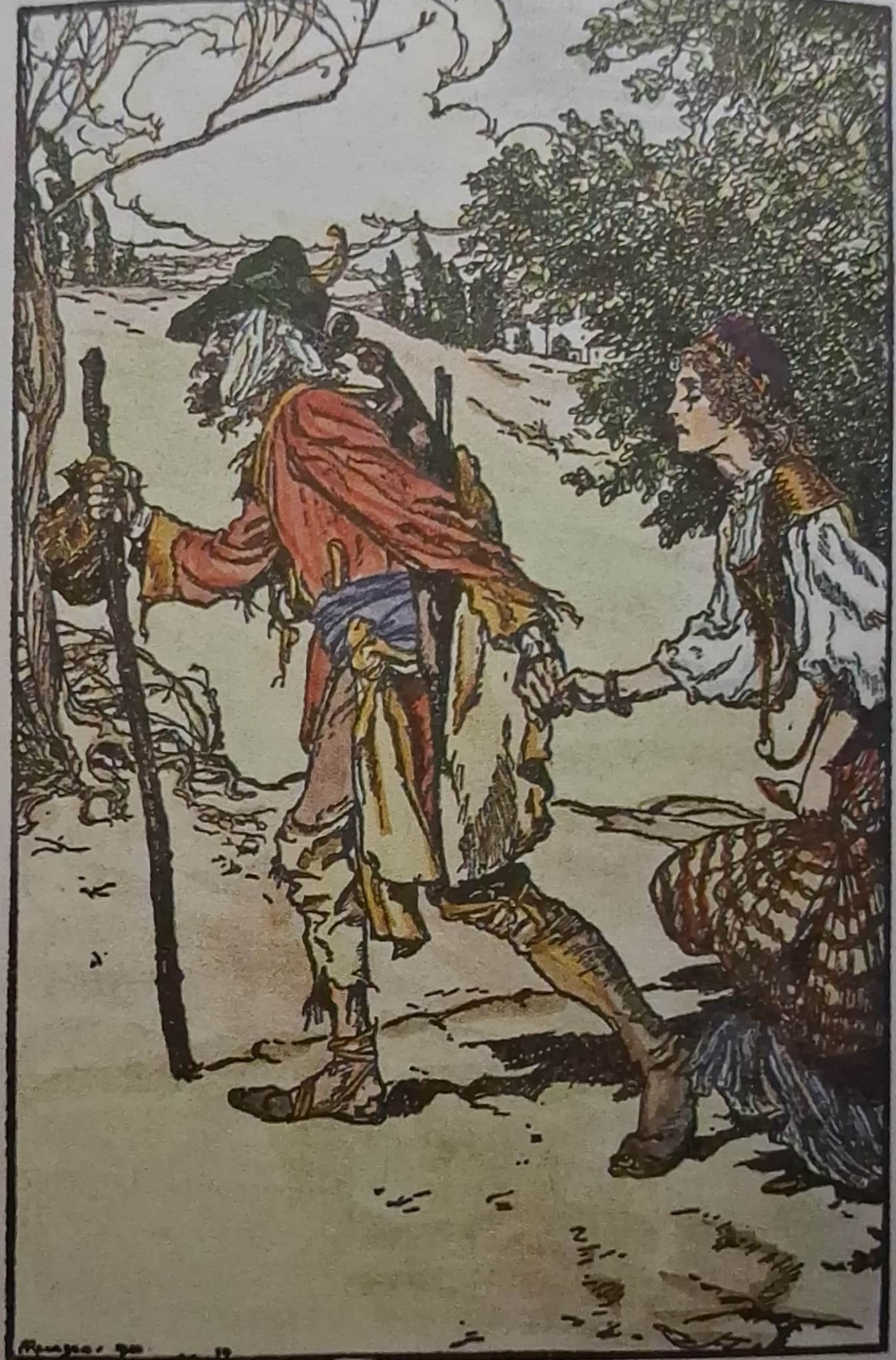
'Ah! unlucky wretch that I am!' said she; 'would that I had married King Grisly Beard!'

Then they came to a great city. 'Whose is this noble city?' said she.

'It belongs to King Grisly Beard; hadst thou taken him, it had all been thine.'

'Ah! wretch that I am!' sighed she; 'why did I not marry King Grisly Beard?'

'That is no business of mine,' said the fiddler; 'why should you wish for another husband? Am not I good enough for you?'



At last they came to a small cottage. 'What a paltry place!' said she; 'to whom does that little dirty hole belong?'

Then the fiddler said, 'That is your and my house, where we are to live.'

'Where are your servants?' cried she.

'What do we want with servants?' said he; 'you must do for yourself whatever is to be done. Now make the fire, and put on water and cook my supper, for I am very tired.'

But the princess knew nothing of making fires and cooking, and the fiddler was forced to help her. When they had eaten a very scanty meal they went to bed; but the fiddler made her get up very early in the morning to clean the house. Thus they lived for two days; and when they had eaten up all there was in the cottage, the man said, 'Wife, we can't go on thus, spending money and earning nothing. You must learn to weave baskets.' Then he went out and cut willows, and brought them home, and she began to weave; but it made her fingers very sore. 'I see this work won't do,' said he; 'try and spin, perhaps you will do that better.' So she sat down and tried to spin; but the threads cut her tender fingers till the blood ran. 'See now,' said the fiddler, 'you are good for nothing; you can do no work: what a bargain I have got! However, I'll try and set up a trade in pots and pans, and you shall stand in the market and sell them.'

'Alas!' sighed she, 'if any of my father's court should pass by and see me standing in the market, how they will laugh at me!'

But her husband did not care for that, and said she must work if she did not wish to die of hunger. At first the trade went well; for many people, seeing such a beautiful woman, went to buy her wares, and paid their money without thinking of taking away the goods. They lived on this as long as it lasted; and then her husband bought a fresh lot of ware, and she sat herself down with it in the corner of the market;

but a drunken soldier soon came by, and rode his horse against her stall, and broke all her goods into a thousand pieces.

Then she began to cry, and knew not what to do. 'Ah! What will become of me?' said she; 'what will my husband say?' So she ran home and told him all.

'Who would have thought you would have been so silly,' said he, 'as to put an earthenware stall in the corner of the market, where everybody passes? But let us have no more crying; I see you are not fit for this sort of work, so I have been to the king's palace, and asked if they want a kitchen-maid; and they say they will take you, and there you will have plenty to eat.'

Thus the princess became a kitchen-maid, and helped the cook to do all the dirtiest work; but she was allowed to carry home some of the meat that was left, and on this they lived.

She had not been there long before she heard that the king's eldest son was passing by, going to be married; and she went to one of the windows and looked out. Everything was ready, and all the pomp and brightness of the court was there. Then she bitterly grieved for the pride and folly which had brought her so low. And the servants gave her some of the rich meats, which she put into her basket to take home.

All on a sudden, as she was going out, in came the king's son in golden clothes; and when he saw a beautiful woman at the door, he took her by the hand, and said she should be his partner in the dance; but she trembled for fear, for she saw that it was King Grisly Beard, who was making sport of her. However, he kept fast hold, and led her in; and the cover of the basket came off, so that the meats in it fell about. Then everybody laughed and jeered at her; and she was so abashed that she wished herself a thousand feet deep in the earth. She sprang to the door to run away; but on the steps King Grisly Beard overtook her, and brought her back and said, 'Fear me not! I am the fiddler who has lived with you in the hut. I brought you there because I really loved you. I am also the soldier that overset your stall. I have done all this only to cure you of your silly pride, and to show you the folly of your ill-treatment of me. Now all is over: you have learnt wisdom, and it is time to hold our marriage feast.'

Then the chamberlains came and brought her the most beautiful robes; and her father and his whole court were there already, and welcomed her home on her marriage. Joy was in every face and every heart. The feast was grand; they danced and sang; all were merry; and I only wish that you and I had been of the party.

Iron Hans

There was once upon a time a king who had a great forest near his palace, full of all kinds of wild animals. One day he sent out a huntsman to shoot him a roe, but he did not come back. 'Perhaps some accident has befallen him,' said the king, and the next day he sent out two more huntsmen who were to search for him, but they too stayed away. Then on the third day, he sent for all his huntsmen, and said: 'Scour the whole forest through, and do not give up until you have found all three.' But of these also, none came home again, none were seen again.

From that time forth, no one would any longer venture into the forest, and it lay there in deep stillness and solitude, and nothing was seen of it, except sometimes by an eagle or a hawk flying over it. This lasted for many years, until an unknown huntsman announced himself to the king as seeking a situation, and offered to go into the dangerous forest.

The king, however, would not give his consent, and said: 'It is not safe in there; I fear it would fare with you no better than with the others, and you would never come out again.'

The huntsman replied: 'Lord, I will venture it at my own risk, of fear I know nothing.'

The huntsman therefore betook himself with his dog to the forest. It was not long before the dog fell in with some game on the way, and wanted to pursue it; but hardly had the dog run two steps when it stood before a deep pool, could go no farther, and a naked arm stretched itself out of the water, seized it, and drew it under. When the huntsman saw that, he went back and fetched three men to come with buckets to bale out the water. When they got to the bottom they saw lying there a wild man whose body was brown like rusty iron, and whose hair hung over his face down to his knees. They bound him with cords, and led him away to the castle. There was great astonishment over the wild man; the king, however, had him put in an iron cage in his courtyard, and forbade the door to be opened on pain of death, and the queen herself was to take the key into her keeping. And from this time forth everyone could again go into the forest with safety.

The king had a son of eight years, who was once playing in the courtyard, and while he was playing, his golden ball fell into the cage. The boy ran thither and said: 'Give me my ball.'

'Not till you have unlocked the door for me,' answered the man.

'No,' said the boy, 'I will not do that; the king has forbidden it,' and ran away.

The next day he again went and asked for his ball; the wild man said: 'Open my door,' but the boy would not.

On the third day the king had ridden out hunting, and the boy went once more and said: 'I cannot open the door even if I wished, for I have not the key.'

Then the wild man said: 'It lies under your mother's pillow, you can find it there.'

The boy, who wanted to have his ball back, cast all thought to the winds, and brought the key. The door opened with difficulty, and the boy pinched his fingers. When it was open the wild man stepped out, gave him the golden ball, and hurried away.

The boy had become afraid; he called and cried after him: 'Oh, wild man, do not go away, or I shall be beaten!'

The wild man turned back, took him up, set him on his shoulder, and went with hasty steps into the forest.

When the king came home, he observed the empty cage, and asked the queen how that had happened. She knew nothing about it, and sought the key, but it was gone. She called the boy, but no one answered. The king sent out people to seek for him in the fields, but they did not find him. Then he could easily guess what had happened, and much grief reigned in the royal court.

When the wild man had once more reached the dark forest, he took the boy down from his shoulder, and said to him: 'You will never see your father and mother again, but I will keep you with me, for you have set me free and I have compassion for you. If you do all I bid you, you shall fare well. Of treasure and gold have I enough, and more than anyone in the world.'

He made a bed of moss for the boy on which he slept, and the next morning the man took him to a well, and said: 'Behold, the gold well is as bright and clear as crystal; you shall sit beside it, and take care that nothing falls into it, or it will be polluted. I will come every evening to see if you have obeyed my order.'

The boy placed himself by the brink of the well, and often saw a golden fish or a golden snake show itself therein, and took care that nothing fell in. As he was thus sitting, his finger hurt him so violently that he involuntarily put it in the water. He drew it quickly out again, but saw that it was quite gilded, and whatever pains he took to wash the gold off again, all was to no purpose. In the evening Iron

Hans came back, looked at the boy, and said: 'What has happened to the well?'

'Nothing nothing,' he answered, and held his finger behind his back, that the man might not see it.

But he said: 'You have dipped your finger into the water; this time it may pass, but take care you do not again let anything go in.'

By daybreak the boy was already sitting by the well and watching it. His finger hurt him again, and as he stooped his head over it, unhappily a hair fell down into the well. He took it quickly out, but it was already quite gilded. Iron Hans came, and already knew what had happened. 'You have let a hair fall into the well,' said he. 'I will allow you to watch by it once more, but if this happens for the third time then the well is polluted and you can no longer remain with me.'

On the third day, the boy sat by the well, and did not stir his finger, however much it hurt him. But the time was long to him, and he looked at the reflection of his face on the surface of the water. And as he bent down more and more, trying to look straight into the eyes, his long hair fell down from his shoulders into the water. He raised himself up quickly, but the whole of the hair of his head was already golden and shone like the sun. You can imagine how terrified the poor boy was! He took his pocket-handkerchief and tied it round his head, in order that the man might not see it.

When he came back he already knew everything, and said: 'Take the handkerchief off.' Then the golden hair streamed forth, and let the boy excuse himself as he might, it was of no use. 'You have not stood the trial and can stay here no longer. Go forth into the world, there you will learn what poverty is.

But as you have not a bad heart, and as I mean well by you, there is one thing I will grant you; if you fall into any difficulty, come to the forest and cry: 'Iron Hans,' and then I will come and help you. My power is great, greater than you think, and I have gold and silver in abundance.'

Then the king's son left the forest, and walked by beaten and unbeaten paths ever onwards until at length he reached a great city. There he looked for work, but could find none, and he learnt nothing by which he could help himself. At length he went to the palace, and asked if they would take him in. The people about court did not at all know what use they could make of him, but they liked him, and told him to stay. At length the cook took him into his service, and said he might carry wood and water, and rake the cinders together.

Once, when it so happened that no one else was at hand, the cook ordered him to carry the food to the royal table, but as he did not like to let his golden hair be seen, he kept his little cap on. Such a thing as that had never yet come under the king's notice, and he said: 'When you come to the royal table you must take your hat off.'

He answered: 'Ah, lord, I cannot; I have a bad sore place on my head.'

Then the king had the cook called before him and scolded him, and asked how he could take such a boy as that into his service; and that he was to send him away at once. The cook, however, had pity on him, and exchanged him for the gardener's boy.

And now the boy had to plant and water the garden, hoe and dig and bear the wind and bad weather. Once in summer when he was working alone in the garden, the day was so warm he took his little cap off that the air might cool him. As the sun shone on his hair it glittered and flashed so that the rays fell into the bedroom of the king's daughter, and up she sprang to see what that could be.

Then she saw the boy, and cried to him: 'Boy, bring me a wreath of flowers.'

He put his cap on with all haste, and gathered wild field-flowers and bound them together.

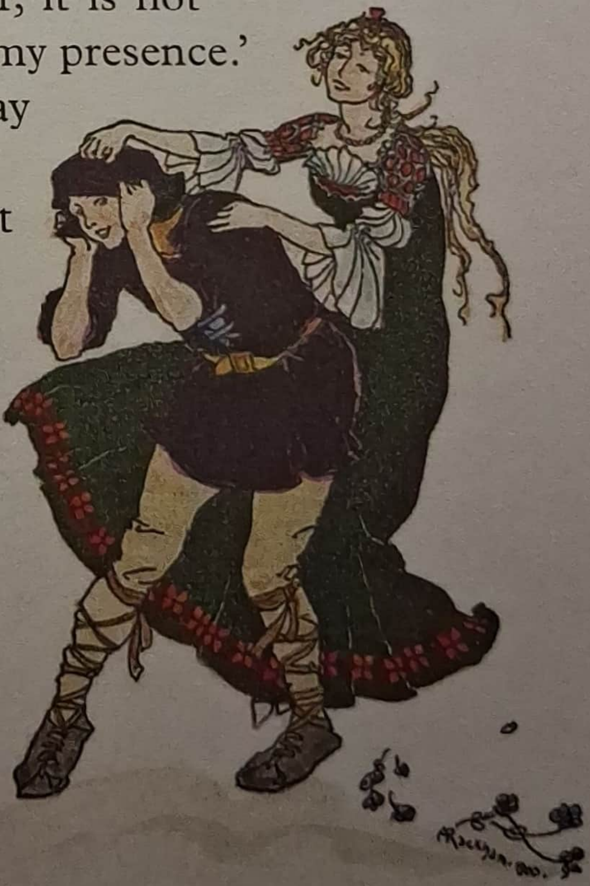
When he was ascending the stairs with them, the gardener met him, and said: 'How can you take the king's daughter a garland of such common flowers? Go quickly, and get another, and seek out the prettiest and rarest.'

'Oh, no,' replied the boy, 'the wild ones have more scent, and will please her better.'

When he got into the room, the king's daughter said: 'Take your cap off, it is not seemly to keep it on in my presence.'

He again said: 'I may not, I have a sore head.'

She, however, caught at his cap and pulled it off, and then his golden hair rolled down on his shoulders, and it was splendid to behold. He wanted to run out, but she held him by the arm, and gave him a handful of ducats.



With these he departed, but he cared nothing for the gold pieces. He took them to the gardener, and said: 'I present them to your children, they can play with them.'

The following day the king's daughter again called to him that he was to bring her a wreath of field-flowers, and when he went in with it, she instantly snatched at his cap, and wanted to take it away from him, but he held it fast with both hands. She again gave him a handful of ducats, but he would not keep them, and gave them to the gardener for playthings for his children. On the third day things went just the same; she could not get his cap away from him, and he would not have her money.

Not long afterwards, the country was overrun by war. The king gathered together his people, and did not know whether or not he could offer any option to the enemy, who was superior in strength and had a mighty army.

Then said the gardener's boy: 'I am grown up, and will go to the wars also, only give me a horse.'

The others laughed, and said: 'Seek one for yourself when we are gone – we will leave one behind us in the stable for you.' When they had gone forth, he went into the stable, and led the horse out; it was lame of one foot, and limped hobblety jib, hobblety jib; nevertheless he mounted it, and rode away to the dark forest. When he came to the outskirts, he called, 'Iron Hans,' three times, so loudly that it echoed through the trees. Thereupon the wild man appeared immediately, and said: 'What do you desire?'

'I want a strong steed, for I am going to the wars.'

'That you shall have, and still more than you ask for.'

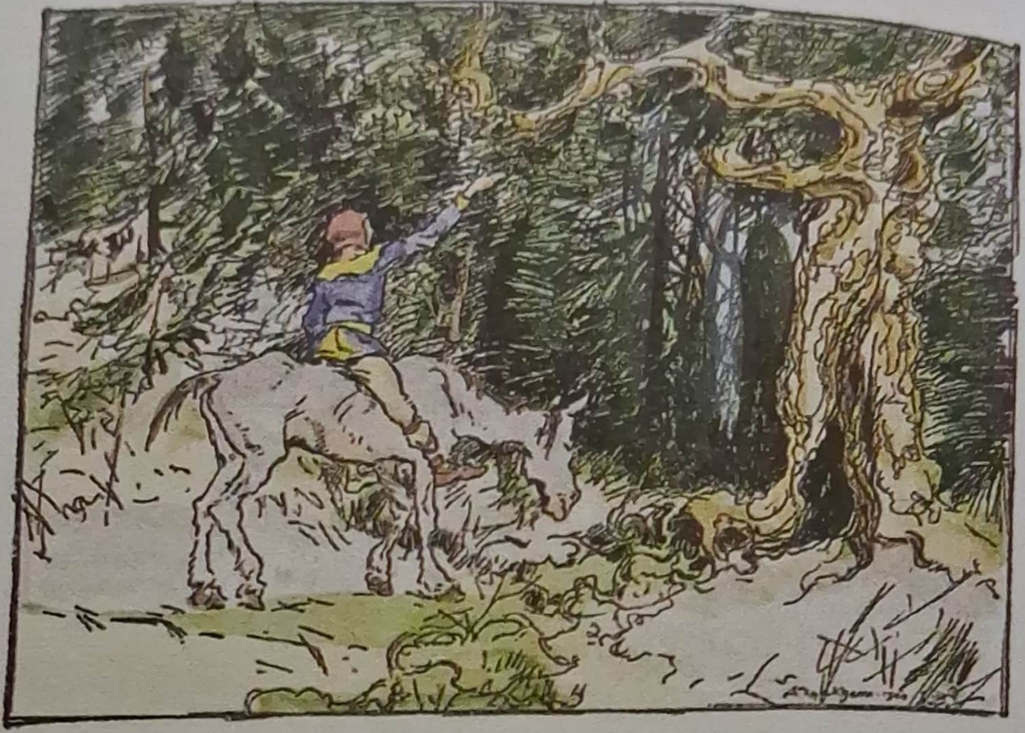
Then the wild man went back into the forest, and it was not long before a stable-boy came out of it, who led a horse that snorted with its nostrils, and could hardly be restrained, and behind there followed a great troop of warriors entirely equipped in iron, and their swords flashed in the sun. The youth handed over his three-legged horse to the stable-boy, mounted the other, and rode at the head of the soldiers. When he got near the battlefield a great part of the king's men had already fallen, and little was wanting to make the rest give way. Then the youth galloped thither with his iron soldiers, broke like a hurricane over the enemy, and beat down all who opposed him. They began to flee, but the youth pursued, and never stopped, until there was not a single man left. Instead of returning to the king, however, he conducted his troop by byways back to the forest, and called forth Iron Hans.

'What do you desire?' asked the wild man.

'Take back your horse and your troop, and give me my three-legged horse again.' All that he asked was done, and soon he was riding on his three-legged horse.

When the king returned to his palace, his daughter went to meet him, and wished him joy of his victory. 'I am not the one who carried away the victory,' said he, 'but a strange knight who came to my assistance with his soldiers.' The daughter wanted to hear who the strange knight was, but the king did not know, and said: 'He followed the enemy, and I did not see him again.'

She enquired of the gardener where his boy was, but he smiled, and said: 'He has just come home on his three-legged horse, and the others have been



mocking him, and crying: "Here comes our hobblety jib back again!" They asked, too: "Under what hedge have you been lying sleeping all the time?" and he replied: "I did the best of all, and it would have gone badly without me." And then he was still more ridiculed.'

The king said to his daughter: 'I will proclaim a great feast that shall last for three days, and you shall throw a golden apple. Perhaps the unknown man will show himself.'

When the feast was announced, the youth went out to the forest, and called Iron Hans.

'What do you desire?' asked he.

'That I may catch the king's daughter's golden apple.'

'It is as safe as if you had it already,' said Iron Hans. 'You shall likewise have a suit of red armour for the occasion, and ride on a spirited chestnut-horse.'

When the day came, the youth galloped to the spot, took his place among the knights, and was recognised by no one. The king's daughter came forward, and threw a golden apple to the knights, but none was able to catch it but he, only as soon as he had it he galloped away.

On the second day, Iron Hans equipped him as a white knight, and gave him a white horse. Again he was the only one who caught the apple, and he did not linger an instant, but galloped off with it. The king grew angry, and said: 'That is not allowed; he must appear before me and tell his name.' He gave the order that if the knight who caught the apple, should go away again they should pursue him, and if he would not come back willingly, they were to cut him down and stab him.

On the third day, he received from Iron Hans a suit of black armour and a black horse, and again he caught the apple. But when he was riding off with it, the king's attendants pursued him, and one of them got so near him that he wounded the youth's leg with the point of his sword. The youth nevertheless escaped from them, but his horse leapt so violently that the helmet fell from the youth's head, and they could see that he had golden hair. They rode back and announced this to the king.

The following day the king's daughter asked the gardener about his boy. 'He is at work in the garden; the queer creature has been at the festival too, and only came home yesterday evening; he has likewise shown my children three golden apples which he has won.'

The king had him summoned into his presence, and he came and again had his little cap on his head. But the king's daughter went up to him and took it off, and then his golden hair fell down over his shoulders, and he was so handsome that all were amazed.

'Are you the knight who came every day to the festival, always in different colours, and who caught the three golden apples?' asked the king.

'Yes,' answered he, 'and here the apples are,' and he took them out of his pocket, and returned them to the king. 'If you desire further proof, you may see the wound which your people gave me when they followed me. And I am likewise the knight who helped you to your victory over your enemies.'

'If you can perform such deeds as that, you are no gardener's boy; tell me, who is your father?'

'My father is a mighty king, and gold have I in plenty as great as I require.

'I well see,' said the king, 'that I owe my thanks to you; can I do anything to please you?'

'Yes,' answered he, 'that indeed you can. Give me your daughter to wife.'

The maiden laughed, and said: 'He does not stand much on ceremony, but I had already seen by his golden hair that he was no gardener's boy,' and then she went and kissed him.

His father and mother came to the wedding, and were in great delight, for they had given up all hope of ever seeing their dear son again.

And as they were sitting at the marriage-feast, the music suddenly stopped, the doors opened, and a stately king came in with a great retinue. He went up to the youth, embraced him and said: 'I am Iron Hans, and was by enchantment a wild man, but you have set me free; all the treasures which I possess, shall be your property.'

Afterword

> 'How happy am I!' cried he; 'nobody was ever so lucky as I.' Then up he got with a light heart, free from all his troubles, and walked on till he reached his mother's house, and told her how very easy the road to good luck was.
>
> 'Hans in Luck'

Grimms' Fairy Tales or *Household Tales*, first published in Germany in 1812, is far and away the most popular volume of folktales ever gathered together. Most households across Europe can boast a copy, and in Germany it is the second bestselling book of all time (the first, of course, being the Bible). It is not difficult to see why it has weaved such an enduring and enchanting spell over the past two centuries. The tales catch and fire the imagination. They conjure up magical, terrifying worlds, populated by strange and unusual creatures. They are beautifully written in plain and simple language, and are easy to remember and pass on to others. They form part of our own childhood landscape, that of our parents and that of many generations preceding them: hundreds of thousands of people have grown up listening to the stories of Snow White, Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel and Rumpelstiltskin. Yet, although many of these tales are so familiar to us as to seem almost part of ourselves, the circumstances behind their production are perhaps not so well known. Who were the mysterious Brothers Grimm? And how did they come to produce such a magical and all-pervasive collection?

Jacob Ludwig Grimm was born in 1785, the eldest of six children, of whom his brother Wilhelm Carl was the second, born scarcely a year after Jacob, in 1786. Theirs was a happy childhood. Their father, Phillip, was a prosperous and ambitious lawyer, who would go on to be a district judge in the area (Hanau, in the Hesse region of Germany); their mother, Dorothea, was the daughter of a local politician, and was a kind and caring parent to them. The boys were educated at a well-to-do school, and seemed to have a rosy future ahead of them. Unfortunately, however, tragedy struck: in 1796, at the early age of forty-four, Phillip Grimm died unexpectedly. As well as casting a terrible and understandable emotional shadow, his death had a ruinous effect on the family finances: the Grimms were forced to move out of their comfortable and expensive house, and to dismiss their domestic staff. With no breadwinner available, the burden was to fall on the elder brothers.

Fortunately, Jacob and Wilhelm were well prepared to go out and seek employment. From a very early age, they had been excellent students; they studied every hour that God sent, and graduated from their respective schools at the top of their classes. Their poverty of background, however, meant that they had to apply for special permission to study law at the University of Marburg: they did not come from a good enough family to warrant an automatic offer of a place. This indignity, along with the snobbery they encountered among their teachers and fellow students, gave rise to a keen political sensibility in the brothers. Throughout their lives, they would stand firm and fast for their principles: they despised social injustice and battled corrupt aristocratic privilege wherever they encountered it.

The brothers were temperamentally quite different: chalk and cheese, even, to some observers. The elder, Jacob, was quiet, withdrawn, somewhat awkward in company, but strong-willed and tough. Wilhelm was an extrovert, optimistic and talkative, but dogged by ill-health (a chest complaint haunted him from infancy). These differences did not seem to affect their relationship, however. From an early age, the Brothers Grimm were powerfully bonded: almost never seen apart, and always eager to protect and take care of each other.

Soon after leaving university, Jacob gained employment as a research assistant to a certain Professor Savigny, who was the acknowledged German authority on the history of law. Savigny's approach to his subject – that to understand the law as it now stands, it is necessary to trace its roots and gain knowledge of the cultural conditions under which legislation was originally made – had a strong impact on Jacob and Wilhelm. They became obsessed with philology – the study of language and its derivation – as well as cultural and social history. All of the many works which they published, jointly and separately, over the course of their long careers, were concerned with researching and uncovering the linguistic and contextual history of their subject.

The brothers' catalogue of academic publications is impressive. There are treatises upon medieval history and literature; a massive scholarly volume about German grammar; another similarly ambitious history of German law; a tome dealing with the emergence of the German heroic legend, as well as many collections of folksongs, religious stories and legends. They were the originators of the law of Consonantal Drift – a theory which explains how pronunciation changes over the decades and centuries; and they were the first scholars to attempt to create a full, etymological dictionary of the German language (similar to John Murray's enormous *Oxford English Dictionary* in England), and, although it was not actually finished until nearly a century after their deaths, this is a testament to their academic zeal and ambitious intelligence.

Yet they came to their most famous project almost by accident. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a rising interest, all across Europe, in the collecting and publishing of folktales from the oral tradition. This trend had begun in the sixteenth century with Giovan Francesco Straparola's collection *Le Tredici Piacevole Notti* ('Thirteen Pleasant Nights'), and continued in Italy with Giambattista Basile's work *Il Pentamerone*. Arguably the best-known collection prior to that of the Grimms had been the Parisian author Charles Perrault's *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* ('Tales of Mother Goose'), but similar work was also being done in Germany by a young Romantic author called Clemens von Brentano. It is Brentano whom we have to thank for getting the Brothers Grimm interested in fairy tales in the first place. He was a friend of the Grimms who had published a collection of folksongs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (which translates as 'The Boy's Magic Horn'), and who asked the brothers for help in compiling a new volume of folktales.

The brothers – generous to a fault when it came to helping others with research – duly set to work gathering stories for Brentano to include in his book.

They would seek out storytellers from far and wide, and invite them to their home. The teller would then unfold his or her tale, and, after a few renditions, the brothers would have perfectly recorded the story, word for word. The sources the brothers found were an unusual assortment. Some of them were young middle-class ladies (one of whom, Dorothea 'Dortchen' Wild, Wilhelm would later marry), some of them were servants (the Grimms' housekeeper, Marie Muller, for example), and some were aristocrats (the family of Werner von Haxthausen, with a large country estate in Paderborn, provided several stories for the second volume). Another was a retired soldier, Johann Krause, who was extremely poor, and would tell them his wonderful tales in return for their discarded clothing. Perhaps the most valuable and voluble contributor was an old woman called Frau Viehmann, who lived in the small village of Zwehrn. Dubbed *die Märchenfrau* by the brothers, she had dozens of tales committed to memory, and her style of telling them was so fluent and correct that most of them made it into the collection virtually untouched. However, when the brothers came to send their first bundle of folktales to Brentano, they found he had lost interest in the project. So, reluctantly, the Grimms tidied and trimmed the tales a little, and published them under their own name.

The collection was not a success straight away, but this is understandable as its first edition was a scholarly-looking tome, with footnotes and a commentary. Yet, as it went through subsequent editions, and became more of a work for children, with illustrations and less of an academic spin to it, sales began to pick up, and the *Household Tales* became well known all across Europe. Their fame, however, had little effect on the studiously minded Grimms. They continued working in universities, in libraries, and as members of parliament. They took up political causes, and frequently resigned over matters of principle. Wilhelm died in 1859, leaving the introverted Jacob (who never married) heartbroken and alone with his work. Within ten years of the remaining brother's death in 1863, their folktales would be included on school and university curricula all across Europe, and would be anthologised all over the world.

The *Household Tales*, as well as the many hundreds of other folktales, fairy stories and allegories that the brothers published during their lifetime, have understandably been subject to a great deal of critical interpretation and evaluation over the years. As might have been expected, they were first taken up by German nationalists to support their political ideas. At the time when the Grimms were working, Germany was in a state of almost continual upheaval and change: the Napoleonic wars were raging; Germany was invaded by France for a time, before she eventually withdrew in ignominy; there were revolutions and counter-revolutions and the aristocracy rose and fell; and the 'Iron Chancellor', Bismarck, was busily building his Prussian empire. Clearly, in such a state of flux, Germany was keen to seize on anything that suggested a continuity of national history or national identity, and the work of the Grimms provided this. Their folktales gave a clear indication of a shared German heritage, and highlighted the nobility and imagination of the national peasant culture. In the twentieth century, the Nazi party and their supporters went even further in their nationalistic appropriation of the Grimms' work. They took an Aryan approach, shoehorning themes of racial purity and German superiority into the tales which, although apparent in some of Brentano's collections of folklore and those of Johan Herder (another contemporary), are clearly not to be found in the Brothers Grimm.

Over the past few decades, analysis of the work of the Brothers Grimm has spread to many different academic fields and disciplines. Psychologists and psychiatrists have pounced on the underlying meanings of 'Cinderella', 'Snow White', *et al.*, and discovered Oedipal complexes, repressed sexual terror and dream-symbols of childhood anxiety. This work was originated by Freud, and taken up by other notable psychologists of all the major twentieth-century schools: Carl Jung, Bruno Bettelheim and André Favat to name but a few. Elsewhere, critics have examined the stories in terms of Feminism, Marxism, Racism, New Historicism and any number of other 'isms' you might care to name. Clearly, interest in Grimms' fairy tales, and folk tales in general, continues unabated, and shows no sign of diminishing.

Understandably, it has been professional folklorists who have spent the greatest amount of time writing and lecturing about the *Household Tales*, from shortly after their original publication right up to the present day. The stories have been categorised and organised according to their place in world folklore, and their roots have been traced across the world. Although a great deal of this research is highly technical, reliant on complicated classification techniques, and not particularly appealing to the general reader, some of it makes very interesting reading indeed. It is a little surprising to learn that some of the most familiar stories have, in one form or another, been in existence for thousands of years, and in locations as various as China, Greece, Egypt and Russia, as well as in all of mainland Europe. Cinderella, for instance, goes under almost as many different names as there are languages: Ashputtel (as in this volume), Pisk-i-aske, Zamarashka, Pepeleshka, etc.

Clearly, there is something universal about the fairy tale, something that speaks to all races and all extremities of the human condition. Where it comes from and what precisely it is, who can say? All we can do is surrender ourselves to the uplifting, disturbing and compelling influence of the strange web it weaves. The tales may have been around for hundreds of years before the brothers wrote them down, but the dazzling collection you have before you now will ensure that they will endure for as long as human beings need them.

Further Reading

Ashliman, D. L., *A Guide to Folktales in the English Language*, Greenwood Press, 1987

Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Vintage Books, 1975

Zipes, Jack (ed.), *The Great Fairy-Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*, W. W. Norton, 2001

Biography

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were born during the 1780s in Hanau, Germany, and studied law at Marburg University. After leaving education, they worked as diplomats and librarians in Kassel. In 1837 they were dismissed from their professorships at the University of Göttingen for refusing to swear allegiance to the new King of Hanover, but were later invited to join the Academy in Berlin by Frederick William IV of Prussia, and there they remained for the rest of their lives. Individually, and as a collaborative team, the brothers were two of the greatest scholars that Germany has produced. Aside from their folktales, they produced many different volumes of research, as well as anthologies of verse and song, and two of Germany's most important linguistic texts, the *Deutsche Grammatik* (German grammar) and the *Deutsche Wörterbuch* (German dictionary). Wilhelm died in 1859, at the age of seventy-three, and Jacob died in 1863, at the age of seventy-eight.

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